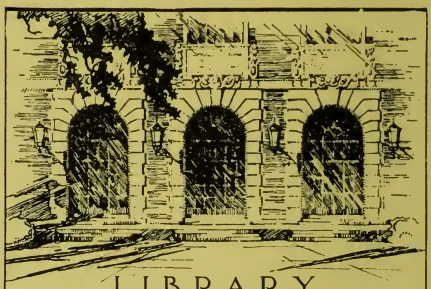

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WINTER IN ITALY.

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

BY

MRS. ASHTON YATES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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LETTER I.

Perugia.

On the second day after leaving Florence, we saw the celebrated lake of Thrasymene, and alighted to get a better view of it than was to be had from the carriage windows. We walked a couple of miles whilst looking upon "the defiles fatal to Roman rashness," and also upon the stream called "Sanguinetto," from the slaughter that rendered it a river of blood, when Carthaginians and Romans contended on its banks; and we are told,

"Such the storm of battle on that day,
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds

To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray
An earthquake reeled unheededly away !
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
And yawning forth a grave for those who lay
Upon their bucklers for their winding-sheet ;
Such is th' absorbing hate when warring nations meet."

That awful scene at once of Nature's convulsions, and men's raging passions, now looks calm as if the clear waters of the neighbouring lake had never reflected aught but the Heaven's own brightness, and as though its banks had only heard the shepherd's reed, and never had resounded to the clanging armour of the fierce warriors whose bones are still found beneath the green turf that became their sepulchre.

The sketchers of our party were so charmed with the tranquil beauty of the landscape, that their drawing-books and camp-stools were called for, and they sat down to pourtray in mimic colours the Lake of Thrasymene and its environs; whilst I gathered chestnuts, and with them "chewed the cud of sweet and bitter fancy," and of memory, as it might happen.

This delay, together with a tedious examination of our trunks on entering the Papal dominions, made us later *en route* than usual, and it was getting dark as we approached Perugia.

At the last post-house we had been obliged to take a *renfort* of two additional horses, (making six altogether,) rendered necessary by the situation of Perugia, upon a high hill, although the road leading to it is uniformly level.

Before we reached the commencement of the formidable ascent, we heard a peculiar kind of shrill lengthened whistle, which being several times repeated, made my blood curdle, and covered me with what is commonly (and in this case appropriately) called a *goose's* skin. We women, filled with alarm, quaked and trembled, having often heard of sounds we believed exactly similar being preliminary to the appearance of Brigands. My terrified imagination at once converted these sounds into signals of banditti, and ourselves into prisoners in their hands, with ours at the same moment streaming

blood from the tight ligatures that restrained us whilst shut up in one of their dark caverns, whence, alas! I saw no prospect of knights-errant advancing to our relief.

When the last ominous sound was sent forth, I covered my face, horror-struck, persuaded it was all over with us, and my heart all but literally died within me; (there are various ways of hearts dying and breaking, especially amongst our sex). I made ready some mental exclamation, not unlike that Mrs. Beverley addressed to the villain who pursued her, "O that my eyes had Heaven's own lightnings to destroy thee!" Judge of my astonishment, on opening them, instead of armed bandits, looking hideous in the twilight, they rested on two large white oxen, (here called "Bove,") to summon whom, together with their owner, were those sounds uttered of direful import in our ears. The "Bove" were tackled to the carriage, and thus with our "train," not "attendant," but ascendant, of six horses, three postilions, two oxen and their driver, we made our entry into Pe-

rugia, where we got good beds and slept well; though I will not answer for it but that some of us encountered in dreams dangers that, on first awaking, made us doubt "were our senses false or true."

We ordered breakfast at an early hour, that we might lose no time in sallying forth during the fineness of the morning. On some of our party remarking the excellence of the butter we were eating, our attendant informed us that the hotel is regularly supplied from the Prince Doria's farm near Rome, one hundred miles distant; adding that his highness has got Swiss and English dairy-maids, who manufacture an article such as was formerly unknown here. The cattle are all kept too busy working in the fields to allow of their supplying the inhabitants with butter; even milk is very scarce.

There is something very striking in the appearance of Perugia; "it stands at this day on the very foundations laid by the Etruscans, and occupies the exact surface of the ancient city; surrounded with solid walls covering the crest

of the hill, on which they rise with close-packed houses and tortuous declivitous streets; it presents the same appearance which it doubtless exhibited in ages long anterior to the Roman conquest." I believe it is considered one of the most ancient cities in Italy, and boasts of having been at least middle-aged when Rome was young.

Though situated on the top of a mountain, no idea of barrenness is connected with it, nor is anything of the kind to be seen in this neighbourhood. The varied undulating forms of the Apennines, combine, with the predominating height on which the towers and cupolas of the city stand so conspicuous, to give the place an air of lofty magnificence, and the extreme fertility of the land in all directions, adds much to the beauty of the whole scenery.

We first saw the Tiber here winding its way amongst the hills, and duly honouring the importance attached to its name, hailed it with some enthusiasm, though doubtless not so rapturously as "The Sea, the Sea!" was descried by wayfarers of a more ancient period.

We are to devote a couple of days to seeing what is best worth attention in the town and neighbourhood. In the latter are some very remarkable Etruscan tombs, between two or three miles distant. On our way thither, on the slope of a hill, we observed a number of men busy with their spades delving. Two or three large square slabs of old tufa stones were lying half concealed amongst the surrounding olive trees. The workmen confidently asserted them to be doors for closing the entrance to tombs, and that farther excavations will lead to the finding of other ancient Etruscan sepulchres. We afterwards visited one not far off, (discovered only last year,) and descended twenty or thirty feet to the outer door; then went along a passage cut in the tufa rock, which led to the sepulchre, consisting of five small chambers, two on either side of the same size, and one at the farther end, larger and more ornamented, and which alone contains several sarcophagi of the purest white travertine. I should have taken them for marble, had I

not been informed otherwise; they are about two feet and a half long, by fourteen inches broad, and eighteen in depth. In these were deposited the ashes of different members of a family named Volumnia. The cover or lid of each is ornamented with a figure sculptured much more beautifully than any I have seen on other Etruscan tombs, in which Egyptian clumsiness seemed to have struggled in the sculptor's mind against the gracefulness of Grecian art.

We found the entrance to the sepulchre rather damp, but the interior was quite dry, and evinced no tendency to moulder or decay; the walls of the different apartments are smooth and even as if but recently plastered; in the central one hangs an antique lamp, the others are all unfurnished and untenanted by any remains of mortality. The family for whose last home they were destined, perhaps became extinct; but it is vain for me to hazard any conjecture on the subject; had there even been a mummy I suppose I might have said,

"I need not ask thee if that hand when armed,
Has any Roman soldier mauled and knuckled?
For thou wert dead, and buried, and embalmed,
Ere Romulus and Remus had been suckled;
Antiquity appears to have begun
Long after thy primeval race was run."

We rambled for some time in the adjacent olive grounds, and went to the house of the present proprietor of the interesting sepulchre we had been examining, and there saw many pieces, of ancient disinterred terra cotta.

To-morrow, I shall resume my account of Perugia; for the present, adieu!

LETTER II.

Perugia.

We went this morning to see the cathedral and some public buildings, all of which are rendered highly interesting by the finished paintings of Pietro Perugino, and the early labours of his distinguished pupil, Raffaelle.

One of the most curious rooms I believe in Italy is the Borsa, or room of the money-changers; it was opened for our inspection, being no longer used for its original purpose; but it is duly honoured and taken the best care of. The door at the outside is surrounded by the richest architectural ornaments; and within, the vaulted roof, as well as the sides, are covered with the fresco paintings of Raffaelle and Perugino, representing various subjects from

scripture history; and not a niche or corner but is ornamented with the figures of saints or angels, &c. The whole is well preserved, admirably coloured, and beautifully designed. Raffaelle's pencil was employed upon the least exposed portions, whilst his master reserved those most conspicuous for his own execution. The eye however passes rapidly over them to dwell on the remoter parts, where evidences are seen of that genius which was so shortly afterwards destined to render the youthful artist immortal, and to associate his name for ever with our ideas of consummate grace and beauty.

Adjoining this room, so enriched by the master and his matchless pupil, and also, strange to say, especially appropriated to the money-changers, (intended perhaps to soften their hearts, and render them more compassionate usurers,) was a small chapel, equally richly adorned with paintings by the same illustrious artists, and still in the best condition. Both apartments appear, from their structure and situation, to have been built at the same time,

but our cicerone could give us no information on the subject. At present a door leads from one to the other.

On our return to the hotel, through the market place, we saw large quantities of the finest vegetables, although for the last few nights there has been rather a severe frost, and snow is already covering some of the more distant mountains. The women we met were for the most part pleasing in their appearance; many of them wore the picturesque costume of this part of the country, red bodices, and long white veils hanging behind the head. The weather being cold, we observed some of them, sitting at their stalls, having earthern pots filled with burning charcoal, standing close to their feet, which were more than half covered by their petticoats (and in this respect resembling what Sir Walter Scott asserted of the blue stockings of some ladies whom he vindicated from the charge of pedantry). The chafing dishes were occasionally handed from one to another, for the purpose of affording a partici-

pation of the agreeable warmth to the parties assembled together.

Situated high up in the town there is a remarkably fine, indeed quite a magnificent building, which was a monastery for Jesuits. Under Bonaparte's government, its destination was changed to a University, and such it has continued, and wears throughout a most flourishing aspect.

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We left Perugia with regret; there is so much that is antique in and about it, with but little of those disheartening evidences of decay, that so frequently accompany things and places of remote origin; and its having been, as it were, the cradle of the genius of Raffaelle, and displaying those early labours which acquainted him with his own powers, and what manner of spirit he was of, give to it altogether a peculiar interest.

The country around is richly diversified, and most charming, the same that Raffaelle looked upon when more than terrestrial beauty filled his

youthful mind, the fruits of which enriched the world, and have conferred upon him the high title of painter of the gospel.

Having with regret bade adieu to Perugia, after travelling a few hours, we turned out of the high road, to look at some celebrated churches in a town called Assisi, and surnamed the Seraphic. It is situated upon the very highest pinnacle of a hill, upon which I could scarcely have imagined it possible for so many buildings to be congregated. I suppose the difficulty of finding a level spot caused the inhabitants to put three churches on the space that one usually occupies; for, like a child's card houses, they are piled, in one remarkable instance, church over church. The undermost contains the bones of St. Francis, and can only be viewed by lamp or torch-light. When he sees company in this way, you might fancy yourself in the salons of a monarch; such gilding, painting, sculpture, and inlaid coloured marbles, are displayed in the apartments, in the centre of which the proprietor is placed. And

never was the person of an emperor enveloped more magnificently than are the remains of the saint, which I conclude were embalmed, from the spice-like incense (unless it may be the odour of his good deeds) that fills the air.

Above this church, and resting on the same foundation, is one of considerable extent, and indescribably beautiful, full of gothic arches ornamented with the most tasteful and elaborate sculpture; they are of great breadth, but not of great height, and taken singly would be considered out of proportion; notwithstanding the effect is admirable. The windows are composed of the finest old painted glass, which does not admit the light to enter without tinging it with rainbow hues, which, falling in much brilliancy on some magnificent monuments and particular arches, (while for the most part the building has a sombre air,) add much to the striking aspect and beauty of the whole. A pure white marble monument of a Queen of Cyprus, whose effigy lay under a canopy, surrounded by well-expressed drapery, had quite the appearance of

a lovely female lying tranquil on her snow-white couch, just as her spirit had passed away. She was the fair girl of Venice, Catarina Cornaro, whom the pencil of Paul Veronese has celebrated, putting her crown into the hands of the Doge. It was signified to her after the king her husband's death, that a present of the kingdom he left her would be very acceptable to her native republic, and in fear rather than in love she resigned it, retaining only the empty title of sovereignty, and a revenue allowed her.

A flight of stairs, consisting of full many a weary step, conducted us to the uppermost edifice, which offers a great contrast to those it surmounts, height being its most striking characteristic. It consists of one great space undivided by arches or pillars, excepting a few of the latter, of colossal dimensions; immense windows let in a flood of light on its brilliantly painted walls and ceiling; in short, three churches more differing, all beautiful, and all embodied under the same roof, I suppose are not to be found outside the walls of the ancient city of Assisi the Seraphic.

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Terni.

The day following our departure from Perugia, we reached this old town of Terni, in sufficiently good time to allow of our going about three miles to the justly celebrated waterfall. Though a work of art, it surpasses in grandeur all the operations of nature in the same line that I have beheld in Switzerland; were the finest component parts of all the cascades in that country put together, they would not, I think, equal the sublimity of the fall of the river Velino, for which Dentatus, a consul of Rome, cut a channel to divert its course from the town of Rhetia, twelve miles distant. That town was often inundated by the swelling of the river, and to avert the repetition of such a calamity, a deep bed was made for it through mountains of marble, from the summit of which, its everlasting waters are precipitated into a vast chasm beneath, whence, amidst

roaring, boiling, and conflicting sounds, issues a perpetual spray-like rain, that preserves the surrounding thick woods in continual verdure. It is supposed that in this foaming abyss Virgil makes Alecto shoot herself into the infernal regions; and for the angry goddess who had filled a nation with distractions and alarms, no fitter exit could be imagined than here sinking, as it were, in a tempest, and plunging into Hell, amidst the din and uproar of raging waters. The following is Dryden's translation of the lines of Virgil, applied by some to the Falls of Terni:

"In midst of Italy, well known to Fame,
There lies a vale, Amsanctus is the name.
Below the lofty mounts, on either side,
Thick forests the forbidden entrance hide:
Full in the centre of the sacred wood,
An arm ariseth of the Stygian flood;
Which falling from on high, with bellowing sound,
Whirls the black waves and rattling stones around.
Here Pluto pants for breath from out his cell,
And opens wide the grinning jaws of Hell.
To this infernal gate the Fury flies,
Here hides her hated head, and frees the lab'ring skies!"

After having visited the waterfall, we returned to our hotel at Terni, where we shall pass this evening, and to-morrow we hope to reach Civita Castellana, *en route* to Rome.

LETTER III.

Rome.

A SHORT day's journey from Civita Castellana brought us to Rome; and nearly the whole of the way we were reminded of Ireland. The country in that direction is neither flat nor treeless; the absence of all appearance of rural cheerfulness however is observable, as well as an indescribable air of *tristesse* and abandonment, from which the Emerald Isle, "the gem of the ocean," is unhappily not exempted.

We felt considerably excited as we approached the gate of the Piazza del Popolo. This would be altogether a noble entrance to a modern city, but the decorations on the side of the Pincian Hill, (with the never at any time, I think, pleasing representations of Grecian

art from the hands of Frenchmen,) render it dreadfully discordant with one's previous ideas of Rome, the "Mother of dead Empires."

It is true, fronting the entrance, three streets finely diverge from churches designed by Michael Angelo; the streets are however narrow, and the churches not sufficiently grand and imposing for the situation. But, notwithstanding some little feeling of disappointment, our hearts beat high on entering. Thoughts of the consuls, Cæsars, conscript fathers, &c. &c., rushed upon our minds as we were about to tread the ground they trod, to look upon the memorials of their actions, a knowledge of the history of which forms a leading portion of the education of the enlightened everywhere, and the impress of whose laws and institutions has been given to the whole civilized world.

We could scarcely believe that we were on the point of entering within the once invulnerable walls of imperial Rome. But no sooner had we done so, than our enthusiasm evaporated at once; for on one side rushed out the Douaniers,

whose aspect was somewhat formidable, and there was a rapid transition in my thoughts from republics, patriots, orators, and all the greatness of other days, to the recollection of some uncut Genoa velvet lying in one of my trunks, the possible seizure of which (though I openly avowed its possession) put me into such a trepidation, that kings, consuls, senators, all vanished from my mind.

This disturbance, however, after a few moments, was somewhat calmed by the sight of a funeral procession issuing from a church exactly opposite the Douane. The worldly spirit that had arisen in my breast was calmed by the solemn aspect of a train of priests, the foremost bearing a cross, the insignia of our holy religion, along with tapers, surrounding the body of one whose course was run—whose feverish dream of life was ended! But I was not left long to the wholesome musings that suggest feelings connected with an "eternal city not made with hands," towards which all are hastening; for our postilions were told to proceed slowly, and two

of the men of office, like the Volanti so much in fashion formerly amongst the Italians, walked by the side of our carriage to the hotel, in the courtyard of which, just as we arrived, a still more embarrassing scene occurred. Whilst our carriage was unloading, and I was suffering from a relapse of the palpitations occasioned by the Genoa velvet, the owner of another albergo made his appearance; he had expected us to take up our quarters with him, and, owing to a mistake, (arising from the miscarriage of a letter,) we had not gone in the first instance to his hotel.

The chiefs of the rival houses each claimed us, and such vociferations commenced as gave one the fullest conceivable impression of Italian vehemence and impetuosity. Each combatant looked fierce and warlike, intent on gaining or keeping possession of the prey. In the midst of their shrill clamour and angry speeches, accompanied by fearfully threatening gestures, my keys were called for. But no keys could I find; they had been left at Civita Castellana. I

appealed to one of the fighting chiefs to know what was to be done, and although in the heat of battle, yet, seeing a lady in distress, he turned his back on his opponent, that he might be enabled to assist me. He guaranteed to the men of the Douane my trunks remaining unopened until the keys arrived. Unluckily, those of colossal dimensions exhibited on all sides denoting the patrimony of St. Peter, served, whenever I stepped out of doors, to remind me of my carelessness.

Some days elapsed before I got my tiny bunch of keys, and then all was satisfactorily arranged with the Douaniers; for those gentlemen are not inexorable. Had I been a "classical" tourist, such a *bouleversement* of all appropriate ideas and all suitable associations on entering Rome, could not have been thought of, to use an Italian word, but as a "disgrazia" of the first order.

LETTER IV.

Rome.

YOUR letter of the 11th ulto. was most welcome. I am sorry I cannot send to you an equally voluminous folio sheet; but there is no such sheet to be had. Large thin paper is not made here; a good-sized, but thick inferior kind, which comes from France, is heavily taxed, because, in post-paying our letters, the smallest enclosure (as used to be the case with us before the golden age of the penny post) causes double payment, and so helps the revenue. If I ever come here again, I shall bring a fine stock of thin paper of ample dimensions, besides many other little matters of convenience.

I walked yesterday above a mile to no purpose in search of some common muslin and

ribbon; such things *are* to be had, but not within a walking distance from my present place of abode in the Piazza di Spagna. As I passed along streets of shops of prints, paintings, mosaics, miniature temples, gladiators, Venuses, &c., and all that belongs to *les beaux arts*, I felt myself to be somewhat in the predicament of the cock who turned up a diamond instead of the grain of barley he wanted, and which would have better suited his purpose. I thought with a sigh of the store of comforts attainable in less than five minutes in the hitherto not sufficiently valued street in our immediate neighbourhood at home.

We have been going about at a great rate seeing ruined and habitable palaces, decayed temples, and splendid churches; driving from close, dirty, narrow, over-populous streets to their environs, which latter present a waste of not very verdant soil, uncultivated and uninhabited. On some high hills in the immediate vicinity, where the breezes come fresh and wooingly, persons cannot live on account of

the malaria that prevails; whilst beneath, where the odours are oft times most offensive, they are told the air is very good and wholesome, and that their tent may there be pitched with safety. Invalids, who at home have their couches rolled from one chamber to another, not suffering the breath of Heaven to visit them however softly, here go up flights of stone stairs, often surrounded with open arches and balconies instead of windows, to rooms which from choice are preferred, because situated higher than our attics. Each story is called "a piano," and the third or fourth of these is usually selected by the most delicate of our countrywomen as affording the best air. The rooms are so lofty, that each flight of stairs is at least double the length of those to which we are accustomed; and our wearied limbs make us sensibly feel that it is like any thing but a "flight" to ascend them.

Such are the incongruities abounding here, and many more also which I will leave for the present untold, that I may give you some account of Christmas-day. That day so important every

where to the christian world, was here ushered in by the firing of cannon from the tower of St. Angelo. We got an early breakfast, and set off for St. Peter's at eight o'clock. On arriving there the scene was most impressive, solemn, and magnificent. It was a sombre morning, yet some light from Heaven shone through the uppermost range of windows, while beneath candles and flambeaux displayed the matchless beauty of the building, which was lined with troops in shining armour, such as was worn in former days. Their suits of mail had no appearance of being disused, for they were burnished bright as if in daily requisition; strong light partially falling on the steel-clad men, rendered them distinguished amongst the numerous Swiss guards who were decked in their holiday suit of many colours, and stiff close white ruffs.

At ten o'clock, trumpets sounded; then entered the church a double row of prelates clothed in white and gold, wearing on their heads large mitres; an equal number of cardinals followed, their long scarlet and ermine robes lifted from

the ground by train-bearers in some species of clerical costume; then came four richly, I might say gorgeously, attired Armenian bishops, and after them, and alone, *the* Roman senator; for Rome has but one now, and so situated, I thought he resembled a captive monarch gracing a conqueror's triumph; a sight that Rome had often witnessed in the days of her greatness. A guard of the nobles succeeded; about two hundred fine looking men dressed in scarlet, and in all respects much like our officers, but having more of waving plumes of white feathers in their military hats; these immediately preceded the Pope, who, magnificently attired in white and gold, was borne high above our heads in a chair of state under a canopy, around and over which waved the thousand hues of peacocks' feathers lending their rainbow brightness to the spectacle.

The whole procession passed from the entrance to the farther and opposite end of the church, where his holiness was allowed to put *pied-a-terre*, and ascend the steps leading to his elevated throne. The cardinals, bishops, and nobles

ranged themselves beneath on either side; then various ceremonies were performed, the minute particulars of which I was (in common with the rest of the ladies, excepting the ambassadors' wives and some other great dames, who were more felicitously placed) too far removed to see to advantage, but we heard fine chanting and singing.

At length, the Pope walked,—ay, actually walked,—about fifty yards, from his throne to the altar, where, having first laid aside his triple crown for his mitre, he officiated in some parts of a mass, which he does only three times a year. He then elevated the Host, and at that moment the soldiers, in and out of armour, the coarse and rudely clothed peasants from the Campagna and the Abruzzi, fine ladies in lace, embroidery and velvets (their heads being however only adorned with the modest veil); gentlemen whose toilet might have been arranged for a stroll in Hyde Park—all fell on their knees offering together their common homage to the Deity. I looked up whilst we were engaged in this mute

act of adoration; not a sound could be heard: around were standing in their niches like silent witnesses the magnificent statues of saints and angels that adorn the church; they seemed as though a celestial band clothed in garments of the purest white had descended from Heaven to approve of and join in our worship of the universal Lord in that noble temple, than which "since

> "Zion's desolation when that He
> Forsook his former city, what could be,
> Of earthly structures in his honour piled
> Of a sublimer aspect?"

The short but profound silence was broken by the rising of the crowd from their act expressive of the humblest devotion; the movement, as we replaced ourselves, sounded like the rush of waters. Various ceremonies succeeded, and all were ended by the Pope in a solemn manner giving his blessing to the assembled multitude. He was then carried as before, in his chair of state, out of the church, followed by the long procession that had preceded his entrance.

It was about one o'clock when, in the midst

of torrents of rain, we reached our carriage. It is customary, I believe, on Christmas-day for the Pope, after the conclusion of the ceremonies inside to repair to an open balcony, from whence he gives his benediction to the crowd that usually on such occasions fills the wide area in front of St. Peter's. The elements, however, were adverse to our profiting by his good intentions; we heretics felt more likelihood of catching cold than of deriving spiritual benefit if we delayed, so one and all made for our carriages in the utmost haste.

A few hours later we talked over the events of the day, whilst partaking of roast beef and plum pudding that reminded us of John Bull and our native land. By-the-bye, the two aforesaid dishes as well dressed, according to our method, as I have ever tasted, form part of our dinner every Sunday at the Hôtel de l'Europe.

LETTER V.

Rome.

A WORK published several years ago called "Rome in the Nineteenth Century" we find an admirable assistant; it gives all the desirable details respecting places deserving the stranger's notice. Madame de Staël in Corinne, and Lord Byron in Childe Harold, have imparted in their descriptions the most rich and glowing colouring to the memorials of bygone ages, which have been so illustrated, by the one in prose and the other in poetry, that whoever would see "the city of the soul, the mother of dead empires," so as to understand it with an awakened mind, should be guided by them, for they carried the torch of genius to light up the sombre and mouldering vestiges of departed glory.

The fine arts are the boast of Rome in the nineteenth century, but you must not expect any criticisms with regard to them from my pen, or you will be disappointed ;

> " For I have been accustomed to entwine
> My thoughts with nature rather in the fields,
> Than art in galleries."

" Where the car climbed the Capitol," the artists now hold their triumph. Some of our party were present yesterday at a grand assemblage there for the distribution of prizes to young aspirants whose works deserved the honours conferred. The venerable Thorwalsden presided, and cardinals, fine ladies and gentlemen, and fine music, graced the scene. But the Capitol is not wholly appropriated to *les beaux arts :* in the centre of it the senator of Rome resides : a statue of a female figure in a sitting attitude, a " Roma Triumphans" judiciously placed in front, marks his abode. This gentleman is appointed by the pope, and his power is less than the shadow of a shade : to my apprehension his position seems not very unlike that of the jester

who, sumptuously or grotesquely attired, served formerly to enrich the pageantry and add to the amusements of sovereign princes.

On either side of the senator's residence are two others for the conservatori, (who are, I conclude, equally with him efficient representatives of ancient power,) holding the place of the Ædiles. In all three divisions of the building there are long suites of rooms and galleries, which contain multitudes of busts and statues and some pictures, but not many of the latter. The greater number of *chefs-d'œuvre* in sculpture as well as painting, are certainly at the Vatican; yet several of the finest and most ancient of the marbles and bronzes in Rome are at the Capitol, which is itself the work of Michael Angelo. It does not however, I think, bespeak the master-hand, for there is nothing in it excepting the approach, externally grand or striking, or more than elegant, such as any good architect might have effected. It is wonderful that such a noble site as "The rock of triumph" presents, "The high

place where Rome embraced her heroes," with all the thick coming images of the past that must have crowded on his mind, did not suggest a design stamped by the genius of Michael Angelo, he who, on seeing the Pantheon, exclaimed that he would suspend it in the air, and realized the bold declaration by erecting the sublime dome of St. Peter's.

With great significance, I think, seeing the different aspect affairs wear at present, he turned the front of the Capitol the reverse way; it now looks towards the seat of authority, the almost united buildings of the Vatican and St. Peter's, whereas in ancient times it fronted the Palace of the Cæsars, various temples, the arches of triumph of Trajan, of Septimius Severus, of the great Constantine, and,

> "The forum, where the immortal accents glow,
> And still the eloquent air breathes – burns with Cicero."

The grand combination that those buildings formed (and whence issued laws to the world,) can now, with few exceptions, only be traced in

disjointed ruins, which give evidence of the presence of barbarians, and also of the inflictions of more civilized, but not less direful conquerors.

"Ah! poor Italia! what a bitter cup
Of vengeance hast thou drain'd! Goths, Vandals, Huns,
Lombards, barbarians broke from every land,
How many a ruffian form hast thou beheld!
What horrid jargons heard, when rage alone
Was all thy frighted ear could comprehend!

* * * * * *

What conflagrations, earthquakes, ravage, floods,
Have turn'd thy cities into stony wilds!"

* * * * * *

Amidst the wide-spread destruction, the Coliseum was suffered to stand: it is only dilapidated and despoiled; the triumphal arches also are still erect, left as in bitter mockery to mark how the sons of the conquerors of far distant regions were conquered at home, surrounded by their temples and their gods. The modern Capitol, like the world, turns its back on the fallen and the downcast.

In this quarter of the city, which persons

visit often but never make their abode, lie nearly all the finest of the ancient ruins. At no great distance from the *débris* of the forum, where we are told,

> "A thousand years of silenced factions sleep,"

is the Palatine Hill, literally covered with the sunken and dilapidated walls of what were the chambers, baths, halls, libraries, &c., of the vast Palace of the Cæsars. Mingled with these are now peasants' gardens and humble dwellings, the lowly roof often supported against the broken arch or pillar, emblems of the greatness that did exist, and has passed away for ever, to make room for the brambles and wild-flowers surmounting all, and asserting the enduring supremacy of Nature's most fragile productions over man's boastful and elaborate structures.

No longer can it be said

> "The *Palatine*, proud Rome's imperial seat,
> (An awful pile !) stands venerably great:
> Thither the kingdoms and the nations come,
> In supplicating crowds to learn their doom:
> To Delphi less th' inquiring worlds repair
> Nor does a greater god inhabit there:

This sure, the pompous mansion was design'd
To please the mighty rulers of mankind;
Inferior temples rise on either hand,
And on the borders of the palace stand,
While o'er the rest her head she proudly rears,
And lodg'd amidst her guardian gods appears."

Such *was* the Palatine: what it is now I have described. No place, I suppose, ever brought before the mind in such strong and picturesque characters as Rome does the mutability of all that belongs to this world and its evanescent greatness. Here stand the mighty, the colossal ruins of palaces and temples, (which seem as if intended when perfect to last as long as the world itself,) belonging to rulers and princes who persecuted the early Christians, constraining them to take refuge in underground caverns, where multitudes of their bones are still found.

We lately went through some of these catacombs, though not to the extent of many miles as we might have done; but not possessing any of the peculiar tastes or properties of the mole species, we were glad to re-

trace our steps, to regain the balmy air, and emancipate ourselves from those dismallest of haunts where the light or breath of Heaven can never find entrance. We could scarcely stand upright in them. Such were the places of refuge sought out and obtained by dint of the severest labour of those poor Christians, who found the hard rock, when resorted to for refuge in direful distress, not so unyielding as the breasts of their fellow-men. Some of the sad victims of inhuman cruelty must have stolen out at night, braving all hazards and dangers, to procure provisions for themselves, and the sorrowful inmates within, now amongst the glorious company of martyrs.

At present, how changed the scene here! Many of the professors of Christianity are, by virtue of their office, princes living in palaces, attended by all manner of pomp, parade, and circumstance, whilst every monument that remains, denoting the past existence of the persecutors of the Christians, lies around in ruins; whilst others have been swept away, their site and destination even unknown.

But I have strangely wandered into catacombs from the Capitol, of which latter I have not said half enough. Imperfect as any account I can give of it must be, I should be guilty of a flagrant omission not to mention that it is approached by a wide and magnificent range of steps—unparalleled in their dimensions, I suppose, by any others that have appeared on earth. They lead, not only to the three buildings I have described, but also to a church denominated In-ara-Cœli, containing numerous pillars of red Egyptian granite, besides fine specimens of art both in painting and sculpture. But what renders this church most remarkable is, its being erected on the site, and including, as it is said, some of the walls of the renowned Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

In the area in front of the aforesaid buildings, to which the magnificent flight of steps conducts, stands the noble equestrian bronze statue of Marcus Aurelius, touching which an amusing anecdote is told of a French artist, Monsieur Falconet. He had just completed a model of an

equestrian statue of Peter the Great, now at St. Petersburgh, and in giving a lecture to some pupils on the Roman Emperor's horse, he pointed out as many defects in it as a jockey could in an animal he was about to purchase; but vain as he was of his performance, some new idea struck him as he was about to conclude the harangue, and eyeing his own faultless model, and taking a pinch of snuff in a prolonged manner, he exclaimed with a sigh, "Cependant, messieurs, il faut avouer que cette vilaine bête là est vivante, et que la mienne est morte." *

There are two noble lions of basalt, at the base of the steps leading to the Capitol, or Campidoglio, as it is now commonly called, and so written on the streets contiguous; it is

* It is mentioned in one of the papers of the Spectator, that "Architects in Greece, by the laws of their country, were not allowed to inscribe their names on their works, for which reason it is thought that the forelock of the horse, in the antique statue of Marcus Aurelius, represents at a distance the shape of an owl, to intimate the country of the statuary, who, in all probability, was an Athenian."

changed, even in name, and owes this modern appellation to Doges having been for a brief period chosen to preside over the destiny of Rome.

LETTER VI.

Rome.

In a street called Borgo Nuovo, is a palace built by Cardinal Wolsey, when he was ambassador from England to Rome. It now belongs to Prince Torlonia, the great banker, and there he entertains persons of all nations, and of all ranks, who bring the requisite letters of introduction.

The salon, where the *belles* of London, Paris, Italy, &c. &c. figure in quadrilles and waltzes, making conquests that produce involvements from opposing differences of religion and country, (oftentimes more intricate and perplexing than the mazes of their dance,) I am assured is the same grand apartment in which the prelate (so "lofty and sour to them that loved him not,

but to those men that sought him sweet as summer") gave such banquets as kings could scarcely rival. The suite of rooms appertaining to it is numerous enough for the retinue he had of three hundred sons of gentlemen, besides servants and retainers of all descriptions.

Since the English nation, like a headstrong and rebellious daughter, assumed to be wiser and better informed than her ancient parent whom she considered in the debility of advancing years to have fallen into too many weaknesses and whimsicalities for a governing power, and therefore threw off her authority,—we have had no representative at the Court of Rome, excepting during the short interval of Queen Mary's reign. But Prince Torlonia supplies the deficiency with all his might, and at his palace we all feel more or less at home, knowing that the invitations are regulated by a "sliding scale," which precludes the disappointments and anxious queries oftentimes made elsewhere with throbbing hearts, as to who will be invited or who omitted. One large card generally

invites us to three or four, and sometimes to half-a-dozen of them in succession; and on the appointed evenings, from before eight o'clock, a continual roll of carriages is heard, like one unbroken peal of distant thunder. The Italians who, for the most part, wisely keep early hours, are returning home from these assemblies while the English are going, and from which they seldom altogether retire before the morning's dawn. The streets leading to the palace are lighted with flambeaux, and when the strong glare falls on the cavalry soldiers, on such occasions stationed at intervals, and who are always particularly numerous towards the bridge at the foot of the castle of St. Angelo, (that dark mass of fortification looking most formidable,) I have thought of the night when Rome was taken, and the French king, Charles the Eighth, entered it by torch-light. But in a few minutes afterwards such dread thoughts have been dissipated, for on alighting I have found myself surrounded by many prepared indeed for conquest, yet wearing such smiling faces as to disarm all fear,

whilst the spirit-stirring band excited only to the mirthful dance.

The Princess Torlonia is a lovely young woman, a daughter of the exalted house of Colonna. Her husband received his present high rank from the Pope to facilitate his marriage. She receives her company with much grace, and dazzles them with the profusion and splendor of her diamonds, whilst she re-assures them by her kind attentions. *A propos* of diamonds, never have I seen them worn in such amazing quantities as by the Italian ladies of rank—I understand they are not parted with under any circumstances; like the church property with us in the olden time, they may accumulate, but cannot diminish.

The palaces of the ambassadors at Rome are thrown widely open to all the best company of every nation assembled here.

The Austrian embassy now occupies the palace that formerly belonged to Venice, and in size and magnificence it corresponded with her greatness, when she "sate in state throned

on her hundred isles." At one of the receptions of the Princess Lutzen, I found myself accidentally placed by a lady, who, of her own accord, for the short time I was near her, entered into easy conversation. I afterwards learned it was the Dowager Princess Esterhazy to whom I had been speaking. Had the wife of an English city knight been in her place, she would have given, what is vulgarly called, a cold shoulder to any lady who had not been formally introduced to her, and whose pretensions and qualifications she had not previously scanned. Foreigners excel us in the exercise of those unbought courtesies of life which have the effect of pleasing without any further consequences resulting from them.

The English have some very agreeable society here at present amongst their compatriots, and we more than once had the pleasure of meeting in company Mrs. Somerville and Mrs. Trollope. At Rome, as I have always found to be the case elsewhere, persons become more pleasantly intimate (though I cannot say it was my good for-

tune to be particularly known to these ladies) when they are drawn into smaller circles than is practicable in the wide expanse of London, and some other capitals. Society, like the wood fires we are burning, must have its component parts placed close together, or it will languish and lose all its genial warmth and brilliancy. Show and spectacle amongst us have been too much substituted for better things, and when not intending to enact them our drawing-rooms often resemble theatres for *tableaux vivants*. Such intercourse of mind as some of our London circles could boast of at no remote period is described by one who was a member of Mrs. Montague's and other contemporary brilliant coteries in a charming little poem, called "Conversation," addressed to Mrs. Vesey, in which are the following lines:—

> "You ne'er the cold gradations need
> Which vulgar souls to union lead;
> No dry discussion to unfold,
> The meaning caught ere well 'tis told,
> In taste, in learning, wit, or science,
> Still kindred souls demand alliance;

Each in the other joys to find
The image answering to his mind.
But sparks electric only strike
On souls electrical alike;
The flash of intellect expires,
Unless it meet congenial fires:
The language to th' Elect alone
Is, like the mason's mystery! known;
In vain th' unerring sign is made,
To him who is not of the *trade*.
What lively pleasure to divine
The thought implied, the hinted line;
To feel Allusion's artful force,
And trace the Image to its source!
Quick Memory blends her scatter'd rays
'Till Fancy kindles at the blaze;
The works of ages start to view,
And ancient Wit elicits new."

My *beau ideal* of English society is the period when Mrs. Montague,* herself a lady of the highest

* Doctor Johnson, speaking on some occasion of Mrs. Montague, said, "That lady exerts more mind in conversation than any person I ever met with; sir, she displays such ratiocination, and such radiation of intellectual excellence, as are amazing." Miss Reynolds has said of the same lady, with reference to her virtues as well as talents, "This brings to my

character and talents, reigned paramount in the world of fashion, and banished thence, not exhilarating gaiety, which she promoted and delighted in, but all such frivolity as we are told of in the letters of "Isaac Tomkins, gentleman."

There are, I doubt not, many ladies of exalted rank well qualified to fill the station occupied by Mrs. Montague, when Johnson, Garrick, Reynolds, Young, Mrs. Carter, Hannah More, and other lesser, but also brilliant stars, rendered her *réunions* scenes of high intellectual enjoyment and of moral improvement. For the attainment of such an end, some mental

remembrance the unparalleled eulogium which the late Lord Bath made on a lady he was intimately acquainted with, in speaking of her to Sir Joshua Reynolds. His lordship said that he did not believe that there ever was a more perfect human being created, or ever could be created, than Mrs. Montague. I give the very words I heard from Sir Joshua's mouth; from whom also I heard that he repeated them to Burke, observing that Lord Bath could not have said more. 'And I do not think that he said too much,' was Mr. Burke's reply."

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effort would be necessary in those who take the lead in our social world, and no one will make exertions in these days, excepting for some positive and tangible good that will aid in promoting individual or family ease, luxury, or aggrandizement. Works of charity and benevolence do not come under my present observation, as I believe at no period did English ladies make more sacrifices for such objects than at present. But the Montague race I am afraid is extinct. Perhaps in some future moral revolution of the world it may turn up again. During the reign of that queen of literature, her own pen first vindicated Shakspeare from the cold supercilious sneers of "the brilliant Frenchman;" before foreigners comprehended his writings, or we ourselves perhaps were, generally speaking, sufficiently alive to the pre-eminent genius of our countryman, she led the way to the numerous essays that have since followed, on his immortal works; and amidst modern abundant eulogies and criticisms which they have called forth, Mrs. Montague's Essays on Shakspeare are, I think, not the least discriminating and valuable

LETTER VII.

Rome.

If ever I should come to Rome again I wish Mr. Babbage may happen to be a visitor at the same time to "the Eternal City," and that he will open his house, as in London, and invite, on the same enlarged and liberal plan as he does there, all the best society of the place, in the true acceptation of that term. The English who see company here, generally speaking, are timid and exclusive. A few favourite artists or authors are to be seen at their parties, whilst others of the greatest merit are overlooked, because of their not bearing the *imprimatur* of fashion. Perhaps it is because we have some innate consciousness of being entitled to the appellation "of a nation of shopkeepers," that we endeavour

to fly to the opposite extreme, of making the goddess of many changing hues, Fashion, our idol.

My curiosity was gratified the other evening by seeing a lady, whom you have often heard me inquire about from my travelled friends. The Countess of G——i was pointed out to me at a *soirée*. From what I was led to expect, I have been disappointed in her appearance. Fame has done as much to heighten her charms in public opinion, as Mr. Carmine in the farce did to set off those of his one-eyed beauty, Lady Pentweezle. It is true the Countess of G—— has golden hair and a fair complexion, but she is altogether far removed from being the sort of person I should have supposed our great modern poet would have "fancied when he loved." She has the air and manner of a lady whose lover never dwelt on any but the most commonplace external advantages. She too seems to have fixed her thoughts on them, and her toilette likewise, in no small degree. She is low in stature, and more disposed to *embonpoint*

than suits her height; altogether, she is far inferior, in my opinion, to the elegant and fascinating grand-daughter of S——n, now a lady of high rank, whom I met in the same *salon*, and whose general sweet affability of manner struck me forcibly. Amongst other instances, I remarked, that in passing along the room she saw a timid girl who was sitting near me, and when the young *débutante* was hesitatingly offering her hand, Lady S—— stooped forward and kissed her in the kindest manner. Her whole demeanor is so free from the cool, calm pretensions of many of her order, and likewise from all apparent consciousness of her superior personal and social advantages, that she might be the wife of any commoner, and never have heard the word beauty associated with her name:

> "Careless of beauty, she is beauty's self."

* * * *

The most remarkable evening we have passed here, succeeded to the morning ceremony of the Cardinal's hat having been conferred on

three candidates. The principal ladies of their respective families received the congratulations of *tout le monde.* One of the Cardinals in whose honour the assembly met, assisted by his presence in the reception of his friends. Cardinal Acton was the only one of their eminences who came forward to all the company, without exception; each party, on their arrival and departure, he saluted with grace and animation. After speaking to him, I recollected that in one of Gibbon's letters, he mentions either his father or himself (the latter I think) having fallen sick at some country town in France, and his cousin, Mr. Acton, a young physician, coming from England, to attend him in what proved a long continued illness, of which he recovered; but a worse malady, he said, overtook his friend, for he fell in love with a French girl, married her, embraced the Roman Catholic faith, and settled in France. Concluding that the new-made Cardinal is a descendant of the Englishman referred to by Gibbon, I looked upon his amiable countenance with great

interest, thinking what creatures of accident and circumstances we are, and that his present situation in life is owing (and perhaps his being in existence at all) to such an accidental occurrence as Gibbon's illness in France.

The Italian ladies put forth all their splendour on this occasion, and many of them were, to use a common phrase, covered with diamonds. By-the-bye, when these brilliant ornaments are worn here, it is in such profusion as quite to extinguish our pretensions in that line. English ladies, whose diamonds are considered very splendid at home, find them in Italy so far eclipsed, that they seldom wear any, and trust all to the brilliancy of their eyes and complexions. Diamonds are heir-looms in Italian families; and often, when every other species of property is gone, these remain evidences of departed greatness. In some of our juvenile poetry, we learn that,

> "When house and land are gone and spent,
> Then learning is most excellent;"

but here it seems diamonds are preferred.

On our taking leave of the different assemblies, we found in one of the ante-rooms of each palace, a table covered with laudatory poems, setting forth by his admirers the virtues of the new-made Cardinal, (not the cardinal virtues.) Printed copies of these, in any numbers we pleased, we were all welcome to take. A few, however, sufficed for us, as specimens of the way in which heaven was thankfully applauded, and mankind congratulated upon the benefits conferred on them at large by the recent appointment.

The *soirée* of the new-made Italian Cardinal (of the other two one was German and the other English, if Mr. Acton may be called English) was held at the Quirinal Palace belonging to the Pope, and thither all gazers flocked; the English having, for the most part, first paid their respects to Cardinal Acton.

The usually dim and only half-lighted streets we passed through were, on this occasion, brilliantly illuminated. All the relations, connexions, acquaintances, and tradespeople of the

different families filled their windows with lamps. The public offices and religious establishments did the same, and Rome presented a novel scene to us as our carriages rolled along.

More than once that we had to stop from the closeness of the throng impeding the way, it was our good fortune to be arrested near to some of the beautiful fountains which abound here, so we were compensated for the otherwise tediousness of delay by those delicious sounds of which the ear never tires. I shall not easily forget the soothing murmurs of the fountain of the Quirinal Hill on that evening; as its waters were thrown up, they seemed like an embodied zephyr, light, graceful, and refreshing; or as though some pure bright spirit kept unceasing vigils to guard and bless mankind, or was doing homage to the Creator of the visible and invisible world. I remembered Milton's lines:—

. . . "Nor think though men were none
That Heaven would want spectators, God want praise,

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep ;
All these with ceaseless songs his works behold
Both day and night."

LETTER VIII.

Rome.

I HAVE not opportunities of judging of Italian society from my own observation, and I should, perhaps, give you erroneous impressions if I were to communicate my crude ideas on the subject; but I cannot refrain from mentioning my conviction, from all I hear, that some objectionable peculiarities of manners most notorious formerly, and confined to the higher classes, have altogether disappeared. I have no doubt that, as with us, young Italian ladies of the present day are brought into company at a marriageable age, and form lasting attachments and connexions, and also that married women now never have established cavalieri serventi. The temporary domination of the French had

doubtless a salutary influence on manners in this particular; for, to his honour let it be remembered, that Napoleon always discouraged persons who did not hold sacred the matrimonial bond; of which fact there are some striking instances to be found in the entertaining memoirs of the Duchess d'Abrantes; although his own example does not attest the same right way of thinking; the ambition of forming a dynasty overcame his better judgment on the subject.

Speaking of cicisbeism, Doctor Moore, about sixty years ago, gave the following account of it: "In Italy, levity is viewed with contempt, and constancy is, by both sexes, still classed among the virtues. That high veneration for the fair sex which prevailed in the ages of chivalry, continued long after, in the form of a sentimental, platonic kind of gallantry. Every man of ingenuity chose unto himself a mistress, and directly proclaimed her beauty and her cruelty, in love ditties, madrigals, and elegies, without expecting any other recompense than the reputation of a constant lover and a good

poet. By the mere force of imagination, and the eloquence of their own metaphysical sonnets, they became persuaded that their mistresses were possessed of every accomplishment of face and mind, and that themselves were dying for love. As in those days women were constantly guarded by their fathers and brothers before marriage, and watched and confined by their husbands for the rest of their lives; the refined passions above described were not exposed to the same accidents which so frequently befall those of modern lovers; they could neither fall into decay from a more perfect knowledge of the lady's character, nor were they liable to sudden death from intimacy. But whilst the women were adored in song, they were miserable in reality; confinement and distrust made them detest their husbands, and they endeavoured to form connexions with men more to their taste than jealous husbands or metaphysical lovers. * * * The business generally did end as might have been expected; and the only consolation left the husband was, to endeavour to assassinate the happy lover.

"But when French manners began to spread over Europe, and to insinuate themselves amongst nations the most opposite in character to the French, jealousy was first held up as the most detestable of all the passions. The law had long declared against its dismal effects, and awful denunciations had been pronounced from the pulpit against those who were inflamed by its bloody spirit; but without effect, till ridicule joined in the argument, and exposed those husbands to the contempt and derision of every fashionable society, who harboured the gloomy demon in their bosom.

"As in England, after the Restoration, people, to show their aversion to the puritans, turned every appearance of religion into ridicule, and, from the extreme of hypocrisy, flew at once to that of profligacy; so in Italy, from the custom of secluding the wife from all mankind but her husband, it became the fashion that she should never be seen with her husband, and yet always have a man at her elbow. But before the Italian husbands could adopt or reconcile their

minds to a custom so opposite to their former practice, they took some measures to secure a point they had always thought of the highest importance. Finding that confinement was a plan generally reprobated, and that any appearance of jealousy subjected the husbands to ridicule, they agreed that their wives should do into company, and attend public places, but always attended by a friend whom they could trust, and who, at the same time, should not be disagreeable to the wife. This compromise could not fail of being acceptable to the women, who plainly perceived that they must be gainers by any alteration of the former system ; and it soon became universal all over Italy, for the women to appear at public places leaning on the arm of a man, who, from their frequently whispering together, was called their *cicisbeo.* It was stipulated at the same time, that the lady, while abroad under his care, should converse with no other man but in his presence and with his approbation; he was to be her guardian, her friend, and gentleman usher.

"The custom at present is, that this obsequious gentleman visits the lady every forenoon at her toilet, where the plan for passing the evening is agreed upon; he disappears before dinner, for it is usual all over Italy for the husband and wife to dine together tête-à-tête, except on great occasions when there is a public feast. After dinner the husband retires, and the cicisbeo returns and conducts the lady to the public walk, the conversazioné, or the opera; he hands her about wherever she goes, presents her coffee, sorts her cards, and attends with the most pointed assiduity till the amusements of the evening are over; he then accompanies her home, and delivers up his charge to the husband. * * *

"The cicisbeo, in many instances, is a poor relation or humble friend, who, not being in circumstances to support an equipage, is happy to be admitted into all the societies, and to be carried about to public diversions, as an appendage to the lady.

"Most Englishmen will be astonished how

men can pass so much of their time with women. This, however, will appear less surprising, when they recollect that the Italian nobility dare not intermeddle with politics, can find no employment in the army, and there are no such amusements in the country as hunting or drinking. In such a situation, if a man of fortune has no turn for gaming, what can he do? Even an Englishman, in those desperate circumstances, might be driven to the company and conversation of women, to lighten the burden of time. The Italians have persevered so long in this expedient, that, however extraordinary it may seem to those who have never tried it, there can be no doubt that they find it to succeed."

In the sequel of the agreeable letter from which I have quoted, Doctor Moore tells of a Frenchman of his acquaintance who, during a visit to Rome, tried to imitate the constancy of the Italians by confining his attention to one lady for a short period. On his friend's inquiring how his affairs went on, the marquis replied, " Ah, pour l'amour, cela est à peu près passé, et

nous sommes actuellement dans les horreurs de l'amitié."

Happily for all concerned, the cicisbeo's "occupation's gone." Such poor animals no longer place themselves in the treacherous predicament of the moth flying round the candle; and at no period was the species ever known amongst the middle and lower classes, whose strong legitimate family attachments never suffered from the ill effects of chivalry, platonism, metaphysics, or jealousy, which, as it seems, combining together, produced a state of things for the finger of scorn to point at. The French, in their latest visit to Italy as conquerors, no doubt did much mischief; but in having swept away all traces of such perversion of manners as their courtly countrymen had contributed to introduce, it must be allowed that they and their great leader conferred a lasting benefit on the country.

The point of most difference, I fancy, between the Italian female world and our own, consists in women amongst them retaining the rights of

property as much after, as before marriage, which, in our case, generally speaking, are handed over to the husbands. And far better, I think it, on all accounts, that it should be so, for divided interests might doubtless tend to estrangement in a relation where intimate union is the prime source of happiness. Instances of individual hardship unquestionably do arise from the system, yet, on the whole, I am persuaded it is the best. In all ages of the world, and in all stages of society, we find women's line distinctly marked out, in ruder or softer characters, according to the progress of civilization, until the beneficent Author of Christianity gave to our sex an importance and value in society which we can never lose. But it is a law of nature, or of Providence, which is the same thing, and therefore cannot be defeated, that power should belong to man; and to know that such is the Almighty fiat, and confidingly to acquiesce in the wisdom of it, "is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise," and also her truest interest. Had she to encounter the per-

plexities and embarrassments that befal men in their intercourse with the world, or the anxiety consequent on the doubtful success of projects which possibly may either ruin or enrich "the bread winner," and the family dependent on him; if the necessity devolved on her of guarding against deception, of meeting the disappointments attendant on fallacious hopes and enterprises; how would such things disenchant the home where a man returns to look for peace and happiness, and, by its affording him which, she feels "twice blessed."

Amongst us, rather more than a century ago, the less poignant interests of politics were meddled with by women, in a way happily unknown at present,—a masculine-minded Duchess being at one time almost the ruler of the cabinet, and at another concocting factious opposition to her successful rival. This, no doubt, influenced the tone of society at that period, and in a way so injurious to female attractions, that Addison, who possessed in so remarkable a degree the art of mending manners, whilst

playing sportively with the foibles of the day, in his capacity of Spectator, assured the ladies that he had never known a party woman, Whig or Tory, who had kept her beauty for a twelve-month; "and therefore he would advise them, as they valued their complexions, to let alone disputes of that nature."

In Italy, a woman who is rich retains her money in her own hands, and procures for herself gratifications, the value of which would probably be increased tenfold if imparted by her husband; and, if a woman of little or no fortune is married to a rich man, (a circumstance not of very frequent occurrence,) she does not, I understand, gain the right of a full and fair participation of his fortune, and when his love cools, (an accident to which even the ardent passions of the South are liable,) she feels that a poor woman is united to a wealthy partner, without deriving much farther benefit from his affluence than that of residing in a house of vast and chilling dimensions, under a system of close domestic economy.

There is something not pleasing, or in accordance with the spirit of marriage vows, in this sort of independence subsisting between persons who are bound together so irrevocably, that only death, the great loosener of all human ties, can break their union; for amongst Roman Catholics, no fault nor crime committed by married people, will entitle the aggrieved party to a divorce. Royal personages are occasionally treated with indulgence on this point, which is not shown to less distinguished sufferers.

What is the interior *ménage* of Italian families, few, I believe, of the English, have an opportunity of knowing. Their houses are vast; there are whole suites of rooms, which pretty evidently are rarely or never occupied, on what is called the first *piano*, but which we should name the second floor;—these, when they contain pictures, are opened for the gratification of strangers. The owners live in one of the ranges of apartments above, and for a similar suite still higher, they are very often glad to find a good tenant. Such is the state of things

in some of the grandest palaces at Rome, the Palazzo Barberini amongst others. The finest of these palaces have been built by the relations of Popes, by whom great incomes were granted temporarily, or large estates conferred on their nephews especially—Nepotism being a common charge against their holinesses.

In the course of time, however, in many instances, fortunes derived from such sources have become impaired by various causes, as well as lessened by family settlements; and few ways of replenishing men's resources existing in this country, they have often become slender, whilst the externals of magnificence are preserved by allowing palaces and their furniture to remain in *statu quo;* the chairs ranged close against the wall, pretty plainly signify that they have not moved thence for the last fifty years. I cannot tell exactly what it is that gives them so decidedly the air of articles whose locomotive capabilities have long since become extinct.

Those said fixtures, and some one or two ponderous marble tables, usually constitute the

furniture, or rather, I should say, appendages, of each room; for the word "furniture," in its usual acceptation, implies things intended for use and convenience: the Italian nobles appear to consider it an indubitable mark of their family greatness, having these deserted apartments remaining in *statu quo*, in the same way that our magnates pride themselves on retaining the possession of their extensive estates, however mortgaged.

* * * * *

Since writing the above, I have looked over what Madame de Stäel has said in Corinne of the Italian palaces, and I am glad to find my description corroborated by such high authority.

"Les palais des grands seigneurs sont extrêmement vastes, d'une architecture souvent très belle, et toujours imposante; mais les ornements de l'intérieur sont rarement de bon goût, et l'on n'y a point l'idée de ces appartements élégants que les jouissances perfectionnées de la vie sociale ont fait inventer ailleurs. Ces vastes demeures des Princes Romains sont désertes et

silencieuses ; les paresseux habitants de ces palais se retirent chez eux dans quelques petites chambres inaperçues, et laissent les étrangers parcourir leurs magnifiques galeries, oú les plus beaux tableaux du siècle Leon X. sont réunis. Ces grands Seigneurs Romains sont aussi étrangers maintenant au luxe pompeux de leurs ancêtres, que ces ancêtres étaient euxmêmes aux vertus austères des Romains de la république. Les maisons de campagne donnent encore davantage l'idée de cette solitude, de cette indifférence des possesseurs au milieu des plus admirable séjours du monde. On se promène dans ces immenses jardins sans se douter qu'ils aient un maître.

" L'herbe croît au milieu des allées ; et, dans ces mêmes allées abandonnées, les arbres sont taillés artistement selon l'ancien goût qui régnait en France : singulière bizarrerie que cette négligence du nécessaire et cette affectation de l'inutile ! Mais on est souvent surpris à Rome, et dans la plupart des autres villes d'Italie, du goût qu'ont les Italiens pour les ornements ma-

niérés, eux qui ont sans cesse sous les yeux la noble simplicité de l'antique. Ils aiment ce qui est brillant, plutôt que ce qui est élégant et commode. Ils ont en tout genre les avantages et les inconvénients de ne point vivre habituellement en société. Leur luxe est pour l'imagination, plutôt que pour la jouissance: isolés qu'ils sont entre eux, ils ne peuvent redouter l'esprit de moquerie,—qui pénètre rarement à Rome dans les secrets de la maison; et l'on dirait souvent, à voir le contraste du dedans et du dehors du palais, que la plupart des grands seigneurs d'Italie arrangent leurs demeures pour éblouir les passants, mais non pour y recevoir des amis."

There are, however, many exceptions to this description, and amongst them is the palace inhabited by our fair countrywoman, the Princess Doria, which is, according to our English notions, as elegant and enjoyable as it is splendid. She, and the prince her husband, with extreme liberality, invite to stated grand entertainments, all persons of respectability mixing in society, who have previously left cards at their door.

LETTER IX.

Rome.

THE Church here, in one way or other, engrosses nearly, if not quite, all offices of honour and emolument. Happily for Prince Torlonia, banking does not fall within its purposes. To have a son created a cardinal is an object of ambition with every noble family; and if there are several sons, no objection is made by parents in general to any of them who please (excepting the heir to a title) becoming priests. For unmarried daughters willing to take the veil, there are one or more convents set apart especially for noble ladies, while for fair votaries in general, there are most numerous and extensive nunneries. The number of monasteries exceeds all belief. I cannot but attribute, in some mea-

sure at least, the inferior state of cultivation of the soil in the Pope's dominions to the multitudes of such communities, where able-bodied men pass their lives in chanting and going over and over set prayers, consuming the fruit of other men's labours, unmindful of Heaven's decree, that man shall live by the sweat of his brow.

It would have been an additional honour to Pope Ganganelli, who dissolved the society of the Jesuits, (the Protestant Pope as he was called,) if he had passed a decree prohibiting any men, whatever might be their vocation to a life of idleness, from entering monasteries previously to attaining their grand climacteric. At sixty-three, or sixty-five years of age, or later, infirmity, where it existed, might entitle them to a life of ease; or if healthy, habit would probably make them continue industrious, useful members of society.

But whilst fully alive to impressions respecting the present inutility of the monastic orders, we should not forget how deeply indebted to

them the world is for their services in times past; "when wild war's deadly blast" would have swept away (judging by appearances) learning and religion from the world, those institutions were their safe depositories; and as the ark preserved faithful believers in the true God, amidst the all-destroying deluge, so, the barbarous hordes of heathens, Goths, and Vandals, with all their unnameable tribes and ramifications, poured their myriads over the civilized globe, leaving unharmed and overlooked those quiet retreats, whence were to issue, in better times, the materials for enlightening a darkened world. We must give due honour to monastic institutions for the good they have done, whilst we acknowledge that their mission is fulfilled, their benefit to society consummated.

Besides the numerous convents and monasteries that I have noticed, there are here a great variety of seminaries for clerical instruction—the young men belonging to which, or

indeed to the different religious establishments, seldom or never walk out alone. They are sometimes to be seen in parties of three or four, but oftener in bodies of eighteen or twenty; they walk after the manner of school-boys; and oftentimes with good reason, many of them not being older than the young gentlemen who, amongst us, carry satchels, when "with shining morning face" they leave their parents' house for that of the pedagogue. But here the perambulating bodies are of different ages—embryo priests, of from seven or eight years old, up to manhood.

The elderly clergy do not move about in squadrons; they walk singly, or together, like the rest of us. There is great variety in their costume; some sets are dressed in white, as pure as a flock of sheep just shorn; others in white also, with the addition of large scarlet cloth crosses sewed on the breast on one side of their garments; in general effect, not unlike the marks with which sheep are branded. Black

is of course most commonly worn; but even this is, in many instances, diversified by scarlet edgings and cordings. Purple also is introduced, and in a few cases scarlet stockings are worn. Each clerical body one meets wears a uniform dress.

Friars are sometimes in companies, but not generally—these have the worldly air of men intent upon business; they dress in large ugly brown cloth garments, having for the most part their heads enveloped in hoods of the same material. We never fail to encounter, in the course of the day, an astonishing number of the aforesaid different religious bodies, either professedly such, or in the course of preliminary training, diversified by every gradation of externals, from their eminences the Cardinals, who move about in fine scarlet and gilt coaches of an old-fashioned shape, (such as occur in the prints of Hogarth,) with richly caparisoned horses, and two or three liveried footmen, to the coarse garbed friars, looking as if they hardly belonged to a more

civilized state of society than the Esquimaux, but wearing an aspect rather like the surly Diogenes seeking an honest man, than that of the frigid, unmeaning savages of the North.

I attribute the circumstance of such immense numbers becoming members of religious bodies amongst the middling and lower classes, to the disinclination felt by the Romans to common labour. They like well enough to be employed in such occupations as are connected with the Fine Arts; but all agricultural pursuits beyond the cultivation of gardens and vineyards they seem to have no relish for, and to consider beneath them. And yet it is surprising, that with regard to buildings requiring for their erection a plentiful supply of "hewers of wood and drawers of water," no similar backwardness or disinclination to common labour apparently has existed; for their buildings of all descriptions are extremely massive. The houses, according to our notions of domestic utility, are unnecessarily ponderous and vast in their dimensions, cer-

tainly bespeaking anything but a dearth of hard labour.

It is possible that the Neapolitans, who are in the habit of coming to work in the fields, may have given their assistance to perform the most laborious and inferior parts, and perhaps the Jews were constrained to do the same, for we are told that the Hebrew captives achieved the Coliseum—that mighty work, which, like others erected by them, whilst in captivity, for their Egyptian task-masters, would doubtless now, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, stand unimpaired, as do the pyramids that number thousands of years, if the despoiling hand of man had not anticipated the effects of time—for not only has the Coliseum been used as a fortress in time of war, but it has served the purpose of a quarry for several of the noble families of Rome, whence to draw materials for the erection of their palaces, in allusion to which is the following epigram:—

"Quod non fecerunt Barbari, fecerunt Barberini."

But the Farnese, and other powerful families, and the government also, for public purposes, contributed, as well as the Barberini, to the work of demolition, until Pius VII. put an end to it by setting up little altars in the arena, and consecrating the ground. Successive Popes have followed his example, and the Coliseum is likely, as far as we can foresee, to remain in *statu quo* for many a long year. Thither a friar repairs, on a particular day in each week, to preach, exhort, and pray; he passes from one to another of the fourteen altars, followed by the crowd who assemble on such occasions. This is a striking sight. On the exact spot, which gladiators and wild beasts once rendered a hideous scene of lawless passions and of blood, and where tradition relates that early Christians were cast amongst them to expiate the crime of believing in His doctrines who taught "a more excellent way," now may be seen thronging crowds listening with rapt attention to the eloquent persuasions of the earnest old man, who incul-

cates peace and goodwill to all of human kind, as the injunction of that Saviour, who, by his death, set the seal to his precepts, and "opened for us the joyful gates of resurrection."

At one of these meetings, surrounding a particular altar, every person we saw was kneeling. No accessories assuredly could so powerfully aid devotional feelings—not "the long-drawn aisle"—"the fretted vault"—and "dim religious light"—as the associations connected with the bare, dilapidated gigantic walls of the Coliseum, open to all the winds, and covered only by the canopy of Heaven.

* * * *

The pride of birth as Romans, has never departed since the period when St. Paul declared he was free born; and an observer will often perceive indications of their reminiscence of past greatness in other ways, as well as in the names frequently given by the lower classes to their children. I have several times heard half-clothed *ragazzi* called Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Claudius, &c., (Brutus seems to be a name

quite forgotten,) and it is not wonderful that the Cæsars and Augustuses should shrink from the anvil and the plough, and hand them over to the light-hearted Neapolitans, who seem to love cheerfulness and pleasure unencumbered with any sense of native dignity, or longings after what they are not. There are no manufactures but of priests unconnected with *les beaux arts*, so that one can see good reason why a large portion of men are willing to put their sons into well-provided religious establishments, who are "too proud to dig, and to beg are ashamed."

Although the lower order of Romans are not unwilling to be engaged as servants, it is for the most part persons from a distance, designated Forestieri, who do all the drudgery necessarily falling on that class, and the mode in which the Italians employ their domestics hardly infringes on their dignity. A certain number come to their masters' houses for a few hours in the day, and during that period wear livery, and if in the higher departments, mount cocked-hats—

such as Prince Eugene and Marlborough figured in at Blenheim and Malplaquet. These signori having strutted their appointed time, go home, where they have their meals, and resuming their ordinary habiliments, follow their own occupations; their places are supplied in the same way by others *pro tempore*, and on days or evenings when company is received, the whole muster-roll assemble in the ante-rooms, where the guests walk through a regiment of servants, or what might as properly be called retainers.

A Roman woman will not be hired to scour a floor, nor do any such menial offices; and accordingly, in the best hotels, which are kept by clever men who have travelled, and are either not Romans, or have lived a good deal from home, females are procured from remote parts of the country to afford their customers, the English particularly, the neat accommodation required; and in no hotels are to be found anywhere better kept, or more comfortable apartments than in Rome. Indeed, I am persuaded

that the English cannot continue to reside here in such numbers as I see around me, for many successive years, without producing beneficial changes in the habits of the people; just as we, I imagine, were indebted about the time of Queen Elizabeth, and still earlier, to the visits of refined Italians for many improvements being adopted, and abominations done away with, that had previously been common amongst us.

Houses that are thoroughly clean, and free from nuisances, produce so much more money to their owners, that in this respect alone there is an immediate incentive to improvement; and the Italians, who have in everything so lively a perception of the beautiful, cannot withhold their approbation from the beauty of cleanliness, which is the first step towards following the good example.

They once had a favourable influence on our habits in this respect, and if absenteeism, which we in England deplore on the part of our Irish countrymen, should prove advantageous to other lands, as the winds of Heaven send fertilization

to barren and far distant spots, we must nevertheless rejoice that the English living abroad tends to the improvement of their places of abode.

There is but little street-music here, or anything out of doors going forwards that is enlivening. I sometimes see groups of peasants who come from the country at this Christmas season, for the purpose of playing on the zampogna, (an instrument resembling the Scotch and Irish bagpipes,) before a picture of the Madonna, who has the reputation of being an excellent judge of music, though the airs selected on these occasions are particularly simple—to please, as it is said, the Bambino.

The general aspect of Rome is sombre, and from its appearance, I can easily believe the circumstance mentioned by Lord Byron, of his hearing, whilst riding round the walls, the simple lament of the labourers' chorus, "Roma! Roma! Roma non è piu come era prima." The *triste* appearance which I have remarked, is increased by bodies of men occasionally passing through

the streets connected with the hospitals and some religious establishments, whose dress is frightfully lugubrious. It is composed of some deep-coloured grey material, which covers, not only the whole person, but also the head and face, two holes being made just large enough for the eyes, the rolling of which, as thus presented, looks fearful and ominous.

But a still more depressing sight is often beheld;—great numbers of prisoners clothed in a particular kind of dingy dress, chained, (and the chains clanking,) each two so fastened together as to admit of their walking through the streets to the work upon which they are employed in different places, escorted by soldiers. Many of them are fine young noble-looking fellows, and Fancy, "importunate and vain," will busy itself in conjecturing what those degraded Romans might have been under other circumstances. Their punishments may, perhaps, be only as moderate as they deserve; but one cannot be sure of this, as the courts in which they are tried are kept closed. Public opinion,

that great and powerful resort of appeal which makes judges in other countries tremble to do the slightest wrong to the humblest individual, exists not here; nor can it be even sought or hoped for; there must be absolutely no canvassing of the acts of the constituted authorities. The advocates of the right of doing to others as you would *not* have them do to you, have things all their own way.

Our visit to the Castle of St. Angelo was rendered appalling by the crowd of wretched prisoners amongst whom we had to pass. Their dwelling is low down, beneath the ramparts, from whence, above close high walls, they can behold but a scanty portion of the bright blue sky that is their country's boast—enough however, we may hope, to remind them that "there is another and a better world."

When any disapprobation is felt, or hardships endured, connected with the acts of government, silence must be maintained, or the transgressor is put in durance. Whether the punishments inflicted bear any just proportion

to the offences, we could not learn, farther than that all those of a political nature are treated with an awful degree of severity. Where the laws of a country are good, the courts of justice open, and a free press permitted to discuss and comment on the acts of governors, guilty persons, though at all times affecting objects of contemplation, (for who can presumptuously say that in altered circumstances he might not have been the delinquent?) may be viewed with comparatively little sympathy. But it is otherwise in Rome, where offenders may be incarcerated for venturing to assert the indefeasible rights of man, as well as for breaking the known, necessary, and justifiable laws of society.

A brave commander of the Castle of St. Angelo, in a time of war, was, on some occasion, called upon by the enemy to surrender; his answer was worthy of Wellington himself,—"That he would do so, when the angel surmounting the fortress sheathed its sword." Although the angel in question remains a

passive spectator of human misery, its drawn sword, still emblematic of suffering and woe as when first beheld by mortal eyes, it may be devoutly wished that a Howard or a Fry should arise in this and every country, and carry into the abodes of the wretched and the degraded, blessings such as the prisoners of England owe to those friends of their species.

LETTER X.

Rome.

In a former letter I remarked that the streets of Rome have a sombre air, and in comparison with those of some other great cities they may be called gloomy. Churches of the greatest magnitude, and the richest in the treasures of art generally bespeak their pre-eminence externally; but there are many of them depositories of some of the finest productions, which, in outward appearance, are merely ordinary places of worship; so that they do not, in proportion to their numbers and internal magnificence, contribute to embellish the streets; nor do the artists' studii embellish them at all, though their walls enclose paintings and statues

"that enchant the world," more especially numerous of the latter description.

> . . . . . "Forms,
> By love imagin'd, by the Graces touch'd,
> The boast of well-pleas'd Nature! Sculpture seiz'd
> And bids them ever smile in Parian stone."

Men of genius of every nation, who make the Fine Arts their profession, settle at Rome, and their studii are amongst the many interesting objects visited by all pilgrims to the Eternal City. Their contents are "among the chief beauties of Almighty Rome." These emporiums of art, which send forth the loves and graces to decorate the princely residence, castle, or palace—heavenly forms at once to adorn the altar and kindle religious fire, or to impart more solemn effect to the deepening shades of the cathedral aisle—that furnish our assemblies of men of science and learning in their halls and porticoes, with likenesses of the elder chiefs, who transmitted downwards to the present time, the light of knowledge, passing the torch from

one to another; these studii, to which we are so much indebted, do not in their outward appearance announce the extent and importance of the treasures within. The artists generally ensconce themselves in some of the lesser streets. The passer-by perceives roughly made folding-doors, such as, when seen in London, we suppose afford entry to coach-houses, or similar depositories. Here you ring, and in due time the bolt is drawn aside either by the master or his man, who politely invites the stranger to pass the threshold. On his doing so, instead of the common-place objects that might, from the appearance of the place, have been reasonably expected, one is greeted by antique and modern beauties—all looking young and fair, as they stand around singly, or in groups—an assembly that to Fancy's eye might have descended from Olympus, to bestow their gifts on the honoured mortal, beneath whose roof they deign to come, and whom we should deem a chosen and especial favourite, did we not see their perfect forms gracing the studii of many artists.

On opening one of the aforesaid rudely constructed doors, Psyche, with her attendant zephyrs, seems ready to take the opportunity of winging her way to meet the companion of her joys in bright regions where she was promised that her blighted earthly love should be renewed in unceasing bliss;—with involuntary impulse the stranger closes the outlet, lest she should vanish from the ravished sight! One is next, perhaps, arrested by the speaking sybil about to utter those words of fate which Eneas sought to hear, when in exile, a wanderer from his native shore, he learned his high destiny was to found a city that should give laws to the world. At the next moment the toil-worn Ulysses, forgotten by all but his dog, calls for our sympathy; and whilst yielding to the claim, a Cupid so full of grace is discovered directing his unerring dart, and taking such sure aim as makes one in danger, like Prometheus, of falling in love with a statue. But in an instant we see the urchin boy riding the lion's back, and his mother, with bewitching smiles and irresistible charms, gaining over

Vulcan to her purpose;—teaching us the fact, that love and tenderness will soften and render amenable the most violent, as well as the rudest and most obdurate natures.

It may be, at the next turn of our head, we perceive the spirited grace of Alcibiades, which we are told had some share in obtaining for him the favour of the wisest of men;—or perhaps we observe the sister Muses, without whose inspiration, or at least until it had been humbly prayed for, no poet would venture to touch his lyre. Now, indeed, in these days of curtailment, the places they held are voted by the younger sons of Apollo to be mere sinecures. Still, their graceful forms are prized, and so far, they are more fortunate than many other Nymphs abandoned by their ci-devant worshippers.

But I must put an end to my catalogue *raisonée*, or I shall weary you; for I cannot convey to you any idea of the beauty of the various works of the studii; they overpower the senses with the portrayed charms of classic lore, or impress historic incidents on the mind in a way scarcely to be forgotten.

Again, on repassing the threshold of the clumsy door, (the opening of which had introduced us into a paradise at least equal, as regards beauty, to Mahomet's) we return to the same ill-conditioned precincts we had left; the magic spell of the sculptor's art is broken, and we are made to feel as sometimes happens when a person bids us farewell, whose eloquence, whether in public or private, has opened to us new sources of pleasure, and imparted higher ideas of excellence—we are constrained on such occasions to acknowledge that even here there are two kinds of existence, that which belongs to the "work-day world," and another causing the mind to travel beyond itself and all the ordinary concerns of life.

Thorwalsden is the greatest artist of the present time, and in my poor judgment he is greater than was Canova, in many of whose works I can only see graceful imitations of his Grecian predecessors. The monument of white marble which Canova executed in St. Peter's on the death of the royal Stuarts, seems to me un-

worthy of his name. There are two angels beautifully designed and executed, 'tis true, placed one at either side of the heavy door of a sepulchre, above which are three medallions, like the heads on coins enlarged, bearing the names of James II., his son, and grandson. If the design for the monument was left to Canova, (as I conclude was the case, or he ought not in justce to himself to have undertaken it,) he might fairly have represented the unhappy monarch as putting aside a crown with one hand, whilst grasping *the Bible* with the other, indicating the sacrifice he made to his zeal and religious opinions, *all* of which latter, Canova being a good Roman Catholic, could not but take for granted were found in the sacred volume. Anachronisms, I suppose, are admitted in sculpture as well as in painting; and though the pretender and his son could not have been present at the act, he might have introduced them as applauding or confirming, like holy martyrs, the resignation of the crown which doomed themselves to exile and poverty. Some such,

or much better, exercise of the imaginative powers on so exalted a subject might, I think, have been expected from the great sculptor of his day; and perhaps it was from the impression that he had done so little justice to this passage of our history, that I did not sufficiently admire the light draperies of his Dansetrici and Psyches.

At Chatsworth there is a likeness, from Canova's chisel, of Madame Letitia—Bonaparte's mother—a very fine piece of sculpture; but, as far as I recollect, it is an almost exact copy of the dignified seated figure of Agrippina at the Capitol. But at the Capitol, some of the lower apartments are filled with busts that do Canova the greatest honour. Some are the work of his own hand, but for the most part they were executed by others, and all at his expense; he employed various artists and workmen, whose names, as well as those of the persons represented, are inscribed on the busts. They are a vast number, manifesting that all the genius Italy had produced was dear to him. There are

the busts of every distinguished historian, poet, painter, man of science, composer of music, or sculptor, that has lived since the days of the great men of the empire, (whose physiognomy for the most part had been previously rendered sufficiently familiar), but not so that of their successors; and all the Italians of every grade, who by their works assisted in the revival of literature, or by their talents in any way refined the taste of their countrymen, are here presented to our view. In short, he has commemorated all his compatriots who deserved that honour. A project so noble, having its source in so high a feeling of *amor patriæ*, cannot fail to interest as deeply as do the works of art themselves by which it is so worthily carried into execution.

After wandering, delighted, from one room to another, in the last we saw a fine *bas relief* monument erected to Canova himself, reminding us with a sad conviction that in the grave were ended his labours of love, and the torch of his genius was quenched.

Rome, however, besides many artists of surpassing merit, can still boast of Thorwalsden; he is above seventy years of age, but still a robust, hale looking man. Though his features are decidedly much handsomer than those of Dr. Franklin, as represented in busts and pictures, their fine animated expression is very similar. Thorwalsden himself is a native of Copenhagen; though his father and all his family were Icelanders. He told me that he has resided forty-five years in Rome, during which period he has visited Denmark three times, and urgently has he been solicited to fix his abode there. But his reply is, that all the fabled inspiration feigned or sought for by poets in the Castalian spring, artists, who have been once here, really experience in Rome. It is a fact that Bonaparte (whose purposes we know it was not easy or always safe to contradict) entreated Canova to settle in Paris, and adorn that city by his works. He replied that the attempt would be vain; that his powers would depart from him if he left Rome, for there only was he

a sculptor. Thus the "mother of dead empires" has become the nurse of living genius, and here Thorwalsden still pursues his calling with unabated vigour. In the north of Europe, where formerly the fine arts were little cultivated, he has, with respect to them, created a new era, or rather diffused a new light—an aurora borealis spreading widely around its luminous brightness; he has kindled a love for them in those frozen regions where, like delicate exotics, it would seem they could hardly thrive; such has been the power of mind he has brought to bear on his art, that he has surmounted all obstacles, and in that quarter of the globe every civilized kingdom possesses his works, and exults in his genius; the orders he is receiving continually from thence exceed his powers of execution.

Nor does Thorwalsden forget, in the sunny clime where he is the object of universal respect and admiration, the far distant home of his family. We saw at his studio, amongst other most beautiful pieces of sculpture, a group

representing our Saviour and the children of whom he said, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Thorwalsden has just finished it for the purpose of presenting it to a church in Iceland. Our holy religion being adapted to the wants of man in all countries, and under all circumstances, it is his high destiny to aid in making its acknowledged truths to be *felt* by all descriptions of persons. The mild dignity of our blessed Saviour's expression of ineffable benevolence, and of power self-controlled, were, I think, never more felicitously displayed than by Thorwalsden. He appears to me the Raffaelle of sculpture, deeply imbued with the spirit of Grecian art, but not its servile imitator; he does not make all his men Greeks, and his women nymphs; he thinks of the world at large, and bears in mind that character is developed differently under different modifications of society. And although no one excels him in depicting the fair productions of the flowery garden of mythology, he does not confine him-

self to its fanciful and elegant forms. From that gay *parterre*, with its flowers and winged insects, he ranges forth in imagination as it were amidst the solemn groves where majestic oaks spread their broad shade, and Druids might have worshipped.*

Before I take my leave of sculpture, I must not omit mentioning that we have been to see the statues in the Vatican by torch-light.

Were the whole of the galleries well lighted, kings might assemble from all parts of the world, to wonder and behold their glory. Very different, in the first instance, was our proceeding. We went in the dark, like conspirators, muffled up, not to avoid discovery, but to escape the chilling cold of the place. On our arrival, a group of men, whom we could scarcely discern, received us very angrily, for we had unavoidably kept them waiting; indeed they expressed such vehement displeasure as quite alarmed us, and it occurred to me that a speedy

* Since these letters were written, an account has been received of the lamented death of Thorwalsden.

retreat would be an advisable measure. At last, however, they became pacified, lighted their torches, and we proceeded to look at one fine statue after another. We thought the whiteness of the marble not so profound and chilling as when seen by daylight, nor yet does the warmer tinge approach too near to life. The statues so viewed one might imagine to resemble some bright creations above humanity, whilst partaking of some of its characteristics. On the whole, the strong light and deep shadows produced by the flashing torch had a very fine effect, more so in some instances than in others.

The god of day was the greatest night beauty of all; but, however his form is viewed, its surpassing excellence must be felt and acknowledged; nor can any one be surprised that Jupiter should have had cause to complain of the ladies of Greece deserting his majestic statues to worship at those of the beardless Apollo. When the torch was placed behind this statue of matchless dignity and grace, we beheld

(or fancied that we did so) admirably portrayed—

> " In his eye
> And nostril beautiful disdain, and might,
> And majesty, flash their full lightnings by,
> Developing in that one glance the Deity.'

We had the pleasure of Mr. Gibson's company on the occasion of our torch-light ramble in the Vatican, and we found the comments of that distinguished artist of great value.

LETTER XI.

Rome.

It cannot be said here that "the schoolmaster is abroad;" he is stationary as any of the fixed stars, and consequently Rome is more unlike the rest of the world than any place I have seen. In England, life, in all its forms and modifications, is busy and progressive—society amongst us in all classes is in movement. Science and every species of knowledge have changed their wonted habits of abstract speculation, and are rendering services to the community that not only enlarge our intellectual pursuits and extend our information, but promote our comfort and well-being in the minutest particulars as regards our "work-day world." On the contrary, here as much pains are taken

to arrest the desire of advancement as elsewhere to encourage that which is the destiny of man. We in England contemplate the middle ages and their stand-still, Chinese-like preservation of antique lore, as we read of the Grecian and Roman republics, with a passive belief that such things were, though we see nothing around us, excepting some few institutions and magnificent gothic buildings, to remind us of their period. Being at Rome makes one feel somehow like the man in the story, who, by dipping his head into water, was enabled to behold far distant scenes.

I own there is a great charm for me in the circumstance that all apparently *is the same* here as in centuries long past; though I cannot reconcile this sentiment with many of my fixed principles and opinions. I suppose I resemble the person who said, "Virtue I approve, but pleasure wins my heart." Certainly there is a great deal here that I do not approve, but altogether the effect produced upon the mind by Rome is that of its being delightful as it is unique.

Theological learning, which forms the great business of the seminaries and colleges, is, I believe, in *statu quo*, and so I imagine are the laws, which are administered by churchmen as they were with us when that lofty prelate, Wolsey, was our chancellor.

The church here presents now, as formerly, so vast a variety in its professors as puzzles one to imagine how—its members being so different in externals—it can be uniform in its purposes. Truly it is of capacious as well as of elastic construction. There is the Pope, that "servant of servants," with his *triple* crown; cardinals are seen everywhere drawn in their state carriages, accompanied by fine liveried attendants, or walking in processions, the weight of their scarlet and ermine robes supported by train-bearers. From cardinals downwards are met at every turn different grades of the clerical body; some richly dressed —purple and scarlet mingling in their habiliments, others more plain, until the coarsely-garbed friars bring up the rear, their bare feet

and uncovered heads aiding in appearance their equal pretensions with the meanest beggars to the extreme of poverty.

What a diversity of tastes are thus accommodated within the bosom of the church, for which in ours there is no provision! And, therefore, probably arise our different sects; and this it is that gives to us, who belong to the reformed religion, the character of being divided, whilst the Roman Catholics lay claim to unity from having arrangements made within their own body, to suit many men of many minds. Some amongst us who abjure pomp, turn Quakers; others, who love it, even in holy orders, are candidates for rank and seats amongst our peers; again, those who are stubborn, and will not recognize episcopal authority, are Presbyterians, Independents, &c. &c.; whereas, amongst the Roman Catholics, diversity of opinion as to church government, and many other matters, I believe, is really as great, (always allowing for agreement as to there being one infallible temporal head of the church;) and yet Dominicans, Franciscans,

and other denominations, though differing as widely perhaps from their parent-stock, as do many of our sectaries from the established religion, are not considered Separatists, because more of human skill is to be found in the construction of the Roman Catholic, than in that of the Reformed Church.

In subordinate points, too, we are surpassed in policy, that is to say, if we shrink from the taunts cast upon us for our apparent divisions. Our churches are kept inviolably for the use of our established clergy; none who has not subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles can enter the pulpit of any parish church; whereas, in Rome, the churches are thrown open to all zealous preachers, and it is not uncommon to see a poorly clad friar holding forth under the splendid dome of the Jesuits, as well as in many others of the most magnificent churches. What would the Bishop of London's chaplain or secretary say to an itinerant methodist proposing to preach from his lordship's pulpit? He would assuredly

direct him to go by the shortest road to a lunatic asylum.

Pray observe that I am not discussing which is the best mode of proceeding. I am only endeavouring to explain the ideas that have arisen in my mind on the subject of the divisions in the Reformed Church, contrasted with the unity boasted of in that of the Roman Catholics; but I own it is a topic much too weighty for me to enter upon, and I shall conclude with this remark, that the Catholics, as *such*, presume that they have a superior claim to Heaven; but our church is more prone to exclusion in its worldly, though not in its spiritual arrangements.

* * * *

Our acquaintance with a young clergyman, who had some interest amongst the Cardinals, obtained for us the honour of an interview with the Pope. We were a party of about twelve, and on being told that we were all English, he dispensed with our bending the knee, or showing him any mark of homage to which our stiff-necked,

stiff-limbed people are unaccustomed. Horace Walpole, it is said, on being presented, drew back, loth to pay the tribute of respect good Catholics were doing to the slipper, which the Pope perceiving, kindly addressed him,—" My son, don't be afraid of showing respect to an old man." We, not being called on to pay any such implied homage, placed ourselves at once in a circle around his holiness. He was plainly habited in a loose white cloth robe, made like a dressing-gown; his slippers only were ornamented, being composed of crimson and gold; he is an animated, benevolent-looking old gentleman of about seventy years of age. One of his bishops, an Englishman, stood near, (the Pope was himself standing, leaning his back against a table,) and told him who some of us were, mentioning that one of the party was a member of parliament, another a naval captain, &c., and to each person he spoke in Italian on subjects appropriate to their callings. From us ladies he inquired how long we had been in Rome? Had we travelled much? And ordi-

nary questions of the sort, which, though very interesting to us, coming from his lips, were probably, as well as our answers, very tiresome to him. In about half an hour he called for his hat and cloak, and bowing, left us to take a walk in the adjoining garden.

No other sovereigns lead so solitary and cheerless a life as do the Popes; they never walk out beyond their gardens, never ride on horseback, invariably dine alone, and, worse than all, they see no ladies mingling in the grave society of churchmen with whom they associate, except in cases of formal introductions, such as I have described. This ascetic mode of life, I believe, was enjoined by the Council of Trent, in order to preserve the papal character from the reproaches to which it had been liable from the free manner of living of some such Popes as Leo X., who hunted and enjoyed, without distinction, the good fellowship, to say the least, of ordinary persons. Most certainly, though the manner of living adopted afterwards by the Popes appears unnecessarily strict, and too far removed from wholesome and allow-

able gratifications, still it must be admitted that the habitual self-denial they severally practise, adds much to their dignity and respectability.

Strange to say, it is the custom for the Pope to go very seldom to St. Peter's, never but on occasion of some of the principal festivals. We lately saw there the ceremony on Candlemas-day, of his blessing candles some feet in length, which were lighted, and so borne through the church by cardinals, bishops, and various inferior orders of the clergy. (I imagine the Roman Catholics must think that Heaven is lighted up by wax candles, and some of our own divines seem to be coming over to this opinion.) The long procession was followed by richly-dressed choristers, each two of them holding a book and chanting very finely. In none of the ceremonies at St. Peter's have we ever heard an organ; the absence of its swelling peals, which form an addition so appropriate and powerfully grand to all sacred music, is, I think, a great deficiency. If the ceremonies we have witnessed were about half their present length, we should

have found them much more impressive; they are so prolonged, that the attention becomes fatigued, and droops.

In one of the most interesting ceremonies we have seen, the Pope did not officiate at all; it took place at the Capitol. In one of the principal apartments, on a raised seat, placed on what resembled the dais of the olden time, was the senator of Rome—one of the conservatori sat on either side, all three gorgeously clothed in scarlet and gold. At some little distance, in front of them, were rows of benches for gazers like ourselves. At two o'clock, the room being as full as it could hold, in walked three Jews, very respectable, dejected-looking men, dressed in black: a sort of straight silk mantle hung loose at the back, not unlike what priests wear on some occasions; they were followed by a boy holding a silver tray, with a large bunch of flowers laid thereon. Most inappropriate to the occasion seemed the festive-looking, odorous, bright flowers; but to be sure these are not monopolized alone by the happy, for love oft times

strews them over the grave, where its dearest hopes lie crushed and buried. In the midst of the bouquet there is concealed a purse, containing eight hundred scudi, or crowns. Though not exactly applicable, I thought of Lady Macbeth's direction, "Look like the flower, but be the serpent under it!" This sum of eight hundred scudi is exacted annually from the Jews, who by the payment thereof obtain an exemption from the hardships—I might say miseries—which they formerly endured.

It is said that all the Roman Jews are descendants of the prisoners brought from Jerusalem by Titus, who caused the Coliseum to be erected by them. The Hebrew people live in one quarter of the city, which has sentries posted at the two entrance gates; these are closed at an early hour in the evening, when all are locked in until the following morning. But to return to my subject.

The three Jews deputed to present the flowers stood before the platform where were the senator and his companions, who made a most

conspicuous appearance in their rich and showy garments. The poor Jews, as well became them, looked humble and downcast in their deep mourning; one of them made a speech; his voice was tremulous and indistinct, so that none of us could tell whether he spoke Latin or Italian. His faint murmurings being ended, he presented the flowers, which the senator received, saying that he accepted them with satisfaction, as a proof of the loyalty and attachment of the Jews to the government under which they enjoyed so many and great blessings, and promising a continuance of the same, so long as it was deserved by peaceable good conduct, &c. All this harangue was spoken clearly and distinctly in Italian—in tone and manner as different from what had preceded it, as the respective situations of the parties so strangely brought in juxtaposition.

The congratulatory style in which this latter address was delivered seemed to me as little called for by the occasion, as it would be for those on deck to tell the forlorn beings in the

hold of a slave-ship, that they might exult in the fine air and bright sky, around and above them. The purse thus given, *nolens*, *volens*, defrays all the expenses of the races during the carnival, the opening of which is preceded by the affecting ceremony I have attempted to describe.

It would be considered extraordinary—"passing strange"—were it not the fulfilment of prophecy, that the Jews who fell so continually from their faith, when under the sensible and unequivocal superintendence and direction of Jehovah himself, should (whilst the light of his countenance is withdrawn) so firmly adhere to it in adversity, and under all variety of circumstances, during eighteen centuries of suffering caused by that very adherence. But I am not going to discuss either the backslidings of the seed of Abraham, or their indomitable resistance, as a body, to the truths of Christianity, but only to say, that when I saw them here represented by three of their fraternity "clothed in humility" and deep mourning, paying a hard-earned

tribute to the descendants of their conquerors; their long past woes and captivities (when they "hung their harp upon the willows, and sat down and wept") all rose before me, and the low, faltering address to the Senator I could, from not hearing it at all, convert into some such prayer as, "Lord, remember David, and all his trouble!" "Oh! Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry with thy people?" &c. &c.

The senator's speech being ended, the meeting broke up. He got into a splendid coach that waited for him at the foot of the Capitol, and accompanied by a troop of horse proceeded to the Corso, where his arrival was announced by the firing of cannon.

The Corso is a long street terminating in a square at one end, and at the other in the Piazza del Popolo, where the starting and winning-posts are severally placed. The senator and his squadrons passing along was the signal for the opening of the carnival. Then all our carriages immediately followed, and for a couple of hours we drove up and down in two regular

lines, until we were cleared off by a troop of dragoons. The foot-passengers, however, remained stationary on either side unscathed. Our party repaired to a balcony commanding a view of the scene of action.

After waiting about an hour, we saw eight or nine most gaily caparisoned horses, dash along the Corso, without any riders, achieving as well-run a race as possible. No jockeys could have directed them with more intensity of purpose to the winning-post; there is something very beautiful in their own volition, as it appears, sending them thus fleetly on. Gold-paper was attached in some way slightly to their housings, and kept dropping in small particles,—looking as if their feet kicked up gold-sand or dust at every movement. They are, I am told, urged forwards by small spurs, which act as they move, but which are concealed. The noble animals seem as if they were flying of their own accord before the wind, as one might imagine Arabian steeds scouring a desert, pleasure their sole incentive.

In the following week, the carnival gaieties

were resumed on Tuesday and Wednesday: Thursday being a holiday there was a cessation, and on Friday and Saturday they recommenced. The proceedings were the same in all particulars on each of these days, excepting the last few hours of Saturday evening. The carriages assembled at two, and were driven along the Corso till four o'clock. The higher class of Italians, as far as I could judge, take no part whatever in the carnival, except looking on occasionally from their balconies. The long procession of carriages was formed by those of the English principally, and other foreigners, and by a low class of the natives, who got into hired open carriages, bedecked in the most absurd and tawdry manner. Several of the coachmen were dressed in women's attire, and their using the whip in Amazonian style, had a ludicrous effect. There were not many who represented characters—some gentlemen there were, as well as others, who did so. About half of the persons on foot wore their ordinary clothes, and as for the rest, with some exceptions, one might

fancy that a mob had seized on the old cast-off trumpery belonging to a theatre.

The English, as they passed in their carriages, assailed each other with vollies of comfits and other confectionary, as well as bunches of flowers. The same was also practised by the foot-passengers, and showers of different things fell on our heads from the balconies, from the size of small comfits to that of walnuts—some made of sugar and others of lime. The gentlemen often threw very pretty kinds of *bon bons* into the carriages; we all defended our faces with wire-fans, whilst every one did as much of playful mischief to his neighbours as possible Handsome velvet gowns and shawls were none the better for the powdering they received.

At the same hour as before, the Corso was cleared by dragoons; the horse-races followed, and concluded each day's amusement, excepting Saturday, when all terminated with an additional pastime. It was just becoming twilight when the race was over; in an instant, everybody had a lighted wax-taper in hand—the object of all

was to put out their neighbours' lights and preserve their own. This latter was a matter of some importance, as whoever was without a light was liable to be assailed, rudely enough, unless sufficiently well defended by strong arms of others or their own. The balconies were filled with lights—everywhere the conflict was going on. Amongst so many moving tapers, and a departure from all order and restraint, I became alarmed; and amidst outrageous noise, confusion, and cries of "Smoccoláto! Smoccoláto!" we made the best of our way home.

LETTER XII.

Cisterna.

After much consultation in fixing on the exact period for our visit to Naples, we came to the decision of bending our steps thither on the 2nd of March; and, accordingly, our preparations being made, we set forward on that day.

We left Rome at the opposite side from that by which we had entered three months ago. The environs we had recently traversed wore, in some respects, a different aspect. In this, as well as in other directions in the immediate vicinity of the city, the land is occupied by gardens, occasionally by villas, and also by Columbaria, the habitations of the dead; as well as by many convents and vineyards bounded and intersected

by high walls, which latter passing along either side of the common roads, exclude thence all view. Beyond, the campagna stretches wide, uncultivated and forlorn; no tillage, nor trees, and rarely the abode of man, or shed, or shelter for cattle, are to be seen; a poor, meagre, dingy kind of turf spreads all around,—reminding one of the following lines:—

> "Far as the eye could reach no tree was seen,
> Earth clad in russet scorned the lively green;
> No birds, except as birds of passage flew;
> No bee was heard to hum, no dove to coo;
> No streams, as amber smooth, as amber clear,
> Were seen to glide or heard to warble here."

Yet there is something of sublimity in the stillness and solitude of this region, unvaried as it is by few objects, excepting the whole or dilapidated arches of ancient acqueducts, that serve like ships upon the ocean to break the dull monotony of the scene, which is here, however, grand in its very desolation. For those who enter Rome in this direction, such a solemn, sombre approach, is appropriate to the capital

which was once the queen of cities, but now, mournful and discrowned, sits amongst the stupendous ruins of what had been her pride and glory—monuments of the past existence of a race of sons who were the conquerors and masters of the world. The fine arts now flourishing in Rome, as the Acanthus we see everywhere wreathing itself amongst fallen columns, seem like flowers that deck the grave of freedom.

The encouraging words addressed to Eneas by the shade of Creüsa are no longer applicable to the present state of things; she bade him go

> "Where gentle Tiber from his bed beholds
> The flow'ry meadows and the feeding folds."

I have not as yet seen a great deal of fine scenery in Italy; some I certainly have seen, of surpassing beauty, but in Switzerland I saw nothing else. All descriptions and previous conceptions fell far short of the glorious realities there presented by the "mountain and the

flood." Yet, strange to say, though the love of father-land burns intensely in every Switzer's breast, that feeling has not produced either great painters or poets to extol their country; whereas here such master spirits have abounded, and sent forth to the whole world their impressions glowing and ardent as the sunbeams that kindle them, and beautiful as the skies by which they are cheered and solaced.

Mola di Gaeta.

Our second day's journey was performed through the celebrated Pontine marshes. To the left lay the long unbroken chain of the Apennines, from whence flow those waters that have baffled ancients and moderns to expel from the level ground at their base. The road was for the most part bordered by trees, and the general appearance of the country through which it conducted us, was not unlike a scene I have observed in England, when the fields were partially flooded after heavy rains. I have been told that whoever travels this road

should have Horace in his head, or at least carry him in his pocket, because he mentions every day's progress in this direction. I am unfortunately not so provided in either department; I cannot therefore enrich my scanty notices with his terse descriptive remarks. It is some comfort, however, amidst my deficiencies, to know that more than a hundred years ago, when Addison, who was furnished with classic lore cap-à-pié passed this way, he said places wore so different an aspect from what they had done formerly, that in going back by sea from Naples to Rome, he found it much easier to trace out the way Eneas had taken than that of Horace, because Virgil has marked it out by capes, islands, promontories, and other natural objects which are not so subject to change or decay, as are towns, cities, and the works of man.

We had not long quitted the marshes before we entered into the bright and balmy region of the south. The territory of the Pope is divided from the kingdom of Naples at Terracina, where we came upon the shore of the Mediter-

ranean sea. This latter, as we looked upon it, vied in blueness with the sky, which seemed, Narcissus-like, to love its own beautiful reflected image, and to shed its softest influences on our lower world.

* * * *

Fable tells us that Jupiter oft in the olden days abandoned the destinies of Olympus, when he sought for pleasure on this earth, or upon the waters, such time as he bore Europa through the waves; and in scenery like this now around me, Fancy, left to its own musings, might easily beileve that here his descent had, on some occasion, been made, and that the impress of his glowing smile still remained upon the fertile soil.

We reached this place, (Mola di Gaeta,) a town built on the ancient Formiæ, just as a finely setting sun was enveloping every object in its radiant brightness. The land, that gently slopes from the road to the water's edge, is covered with orange and lemon trees laden with fruit, all of which was deepened in colour by the surrounding glow.

Instead of pursuing our journey immediately, we resolved to pause here for a day or two at least, and luxuriate in the beauties of nature. The hotel, which affords us very good accommodation, is close to the spot where 'tis said stood Cicero's villa, Formiana. In these gardens lie ruins of vaulted chambers, on the stucco of which may still be seen traces of the gay and tasteful patterns that adorned them. Vying with these in elegance, are the clustering wild flowers and acanthus twining around the fallen columns and their broken capitals. Never was a more delicious site chosen for an ancient or modern residence; and it commands also what Vitruvius required for some palace, a full view of the setting sun. The sea from our windows looks like a large wide-spread lake. Hills, promontories, and distant mountains come into view on all sides, together with towers, castles, and monasteries; some of these latter lying sheltered beneath, and others boldly placed on the highest summits. The foreground is a mass of orange and lemon trees weighed down

with fruit, which young hands are just now busily engaged in gathering into many baskets, preparatory to being despatched to Naples. These golden treasures will soon be replaced, for already do their successors, in the shape of bursting buds and flowers, send their sweet odours to us upon the passing breeze.

The neighbouring hills are richly clothed with vines and olive trees; violets are mingling amongst daisies in equal profuseness, and the hedges along the high roads are composed of lauristinus in full blow. I remember once a friend of mine perceiving this shrub on a bleak winter's day still decked in its glossy green leaves, and tiny yet massive flowers, said "In truth it is a good-humoured shrub." At present this epithet is not particularly called for; as there are mingling with it myrtles and other plants prodigal of their gay flowers: for the charms of the south have here burst upon us in such splendour as would lead us to suppose, were there no pocket almanacks, that already May had lifted o'er the world "her blue voluptuous eye."

We went a distance of three miles to see the fortress of Gaeta: its high and strong fortifications bespeak the full command it possesses over every sail which is unfurled on the sea that expands around it. The rock on which it is built, jutting far into the sea, forms from hence a most beautiful point of view. I could scarcely be persuaded that it was practicable to reach it by land, but on getting into one of the little carriages of the country, I was soon convinced of my error, and taken to the spot where the

> . . . "Matron of immortal fame,
> Here dying, to the shore hast left thy name;
> Cagita still the place is called from thee,
> The nurse of great Eneas' infancy.
> Here rest thy bones in rich Hesperia's plains;
> Thy name ('tis all a ghost can have) remains."

In more modern times were deposited there also the remains of the gallant Bourbon who was killed in scaling the walls of Rome, whilst in the army of the emperor Charles V. He was fighting against the Pope, then the ally of the French king, Francis V. That sove-

reign's forgetfulness of the past services of the brave Constable, would not alone have converted his devotedness into enmity, had not injuries been heaped upon him so overpowering as to extinguish the pure and ardent flame of loyalty that burned in his breast. When that light became darkness he sought for death, and found it in the hour of victory. In this latter circumstance, as well as in undaunted courage, our own Nelson resembled him. The Bourbon fell as Rome did also when his conquering arms were turned against her. France could not claim his remains; the Emperor did not seek for them; they were deposited and respected in the strong fortress of Gaeta, until they were disposed of otherwise by the allies, after the downfall of Bonaparte.

Gaeta is also remarkable as having been the sole remaining place in the kingdom of Naples held by the French when the great Captain Gonsalvo besieged, and took it, adding thereby the last leaf to his laurel wreath.

From this fortress we walked above a mile

to see a deep and narrow cleft in a mountain which the inhabitants of Gaeta fully believe was rent asunder when our Saviour was crucified. Every body who observes how closely the convex parts of one side correspond to the concave of the other, must be satisfied that the division was caused by an earthquake; but whether that took place or not at the time specified, the tradition serves the purpose of keeping present to the people's minds the awful event to which it relates.

We met many votaries on the road we traversed; Friday, the day on which we happened to go, being the especial day for visiting the memorable spot. On arriving there, we first entered a small chamber, where a man sits selling little pieces of marble taken from the nearest portion of the fissure; these we were assured would save the happy owners from all chance of being drowned. Our incredulous looks, I suppose, betrayed our not believing them to possess the saving properties of cork jackets. The vendor of the treasures seemed surprised

that we did not wish to purchase some of his inestimable collection. At length, our guide told him significantly that we were English people, and did not understand the value of them; on receiving which information he probably pitied and forgave us.

We descended by a long flight of stone steps cut in one of the high rocks, by means of which there was just room to pass; on the right we were shown the impression of the fingers of some unfortunate infidel, whose hand had stuck there, the rock having yielded like wax to punish him for his doubts. We continued long going downwards, and the light yielded to darkness as the rocks rose higher and higher above us. A pagan in our place might have supposed he was about to step into the realms of Pluto; but far different was the reality. Our spirits were revived on entering a small, bright, pretty chapel decked with flowers and paintings, and dedicated to God, who rent the rocks asunder when his blessed Son bowed his head and made known to the world that man's redemption was completed.

From the windows of the chapel we looked down upon the clear green sea running through the rocks, and heard the loud ceaseless billows beating against them, the white foam rising in the air like birds of silvery plumage. It was a striking and solemn scene, well calculated to call forth deep emotion in the breasts of all, especially in those who were flocking there to pray.

In returning to our hotel we stopped to see the tomb of Cicero, a lofty, circular, half-ruined pile; the inner portion, however, which is said to contain his ashes, is unbroken. This sepulchre is supposed to have been erected on the spot where he was murdered in his litter, when endeavouring to make his escape to Greece from the destroyer of his country's freedom, with whom he would at no time unite himself; not even previously, when the mighty Julius Cæsar himself visited him at his Formian villa, entreating his co-operation in specious purposes that cautiously concealed their ultimate object. Cicero detected the serpent lying beneath the

flowers presented to him, and rejected all his offers, to fall at last by the base stratagem of Octavius Cæsar's adopted son. Augustus was born whilst Cicero was consul, and the world was filled with wonder and admiration at the skill with which he unravelled and defeated the conspiracy of Cataline. Vain mortals that we are; the same moment that we exult in our prosperity, and liken ourselves to beings of a higher nature: that very moment perhaps the train is laid for our destruction! So it was in Cicero's case, as it is in that of many a one who says to himself "Soul, take thine ease!" The Scriptures, history, and our own observation of passing events, supply us with similar matter for reflection.

The guide-book mentions that Cicero's sepulchre was erected either by his freedmen, or by his daughter. Certainly it was not the pious work of the latter, for he lived deeply to deplore the loss of his Tullia. He told the frends who attempted in vain to console him, that formerly, amidst all his cares and distrac-

tions, he could recur to her sweet conversation and drop all his anxieties and troubles; but without her, he could find no remedy for his public or his private sorrows. Sulpicius assured him that if there be any sense in the dead, such were Tullia's love and piety towards her father, that she must be concerned for his affliction. His friends reminded him of the destruction he had witnessed of the empire, and the havock in all the provinces, and then asked him—" After those dread events how can you be so much shocked to be deprived of the fleeting breath of one little woman?" Perhaps Cicero anticipated our Shakspeare by remarking, " He speaks to me who never had a child." However this may be, he wrote a book of consolation, to divert the grief occasioned by his Tullia's death; it is full of examples drawn from history, of persons who had suffered in like manner, with patience and fortitude such as he wished to imitate.

LETTER XIII.

Naples.

We entered Naples at twilight; the lamps in all directions were supplying the place of day, which, as an old song says, "by nature wants no light at all;" the evening was fine, and a busy population were full of animation. My first impression of the place was cheerful, and it was strengthened next morning by the life and sunshine displayed in all directions. So beautiful is this city and its *entourage*, that I am not surprised it has been called "un pezzo di cielo caduto in terra." It is situated in the centre of a large crescent, in which form the deep blue sea is bounded by the land, that extends about seven or eight miles on either side. The view is terminated in one direction by the mountains of

Vesuvius and Somma, and in the other by the hills of Mergyllina, sloping gently to the sea, covered with gardens, villas, and plantations, and ending in a bold, craggy promontory.

The islands of the bay, some near, others more distant, varying in shape and hue, impart a degree of beauty to the scene that words are, I think, inadequate to describe, and such, I suppose, was the opinion of him who said, "Vedi Napoli, e poi mori." The nearest of the islands is Nisida, which is bold and picturesque, composed of rock and wood. There Brutus, after he had "struck the foremost man in all the world," held the last interview with his Portia, "dearer to him than the ruddy drops that visited his sad heart."

The more distant island is Capreæ, about four miles in length, exactly in front of the bay-formed crescent. It rises from the sea like the guardian of the opposite shore, a protection from storms and invaders; it is a grand and beautiful object, varying continually in its aspect whenever the clouds above change theirs. It appears from

hence, based as it is in the deep sea, to partake of all the skyey influences that render it oftentimes so serene and lovely, that it seems a fit spot for mortals or immortals to hold intercourse with Heaven, rather than to be the abode, as it was once, of a monster that disgraced human nature. But one may truly say of this sea-girt isle, that previous associations are quickly banished—

"Look on its face and you forget them all."

The Chiaja, where we have delightful apartments, is a mile in length; houses are only on one side; they are for the most part palaces. A wide open pavement for carriages is separated by an iron railing from a garden of flowers and shrubs, amongst which beautiful marble statues are tastefully arranged, copies from the finest specimens of the antique, and not in any way impaired. Here Venus is fresh and fair as if she had only just emerged from the neighbouring sea, surrounded by all her family connexions, friends and lovers included.

There are no illegible inscriptions to "craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt," nor effigy that

> Some headless hero, or some Cæsar shows
> Defective only in his Roman nose.

Nor Venus is there, having a black eye or broken forehead; nor Hercules crippled like an old beggar, with scarce a leg to stand on, such as one often sees elsewhere, "standing in the open air," as if an hospital had turned out its incurables.

But these bright creations of poetic minds are not the only objects that arrest the attention, for there are two elegant structures, not large enough to be called temples, formed by the hand of taste, in one of which is the bust of Tasso, and in the other that of Virgil.

Italy, since the decline of Greece, has been pre-eminently the land of poetry, and Naples, above other places, abounds in rich materials for that art, a sort of birthright, for it claims to be founded by the syren Parthenope, who, being at sea, (on some yachting excursion, I suppose,)

was shipwrecked on this coast, and we may fancy,

> "Her eye caught new pleasures,
> As the landscape round she measures,"

for she lost no time in building a town to which she gave her name. The jealousy of the inhabitants of Cumæ caused them to destroy it; but on the same site was erected the new city, Napoli. How far this is true history I will not pretend to say, but you must take it for poetic history, and let me return to the Giardino Reale, which I should but half describe if I omitted the mention of a double row of the ilex or evergreen oak beyond the gay parterre, affording thick shade from the sun's too ardent rays, and planted close to the sea, whose murmurs along the pebbly coast are unceasing as the impelling waves, which here never ebb, at least in any considerable degree.

At one extremity of this beautiful garden, and separated from it by a slight paling, fishermen locate themselves amidst a prolonged shrubbery, for the purposes of repairing their

boats, mending and making nets, and several other aquatic requirements. Their wives and children often join them, bringing their meals and aiding in their work as they extend themselves in groups along the sandy shore. The Neapolitan fishermen appear to be a remarkably fine, athletic race. They are coarsely and lightly clothed, and wear a Phrygian cap of bright colour, commonly scarlet, which, from falling on one side, has a careless and picturesque effect, and reminds one of their Grecian origin, of which their language also partakes, according to the opinion of competent judges, some of whom have asserted that "the character of the Neapolitans is essentially Greek; their levity and playfulness, their taste for sophisms and specious arguments, as well as their national dances and festivals — all is Greek among them."

The weather now, in the beginning of March, is so brilliantly fine that it reminds us of the descriptions the poets used to give of May, before the seasons and the calendar got a twist.

Violets are everywhere in as profuse blossom as "the wee modest crimson-tipped flowers" are with us, when Nature

> "Spreads her sheets o' daises white
> Out o'er the grassy lea;"

and in a garden where I was walking this morning, bright hyacinths had already burst their leafy sheaths, mingling their sweetness with the rich odours of Auriculas and Jonquils.

One of our first visits was to the north-west end of the city, where spreads a long verdant ridge, which I have somewhere read was called by the early Greek colonists, Pausilipo, ("the end of sorrow,") intimating thereby that the inhabitants of this favoured spot are exempted from the ills elsewhere common to our race. On the summit stands the tomb of Virgil.

We climbed a steep ascent, and passing through a vineyard, reached a small flat-roofed chamber, in which about half-a-dozen persons could stand upright; but the ashes of the genius that once reposed there are no longer to be

found. It is said that the urn which contained them was, during the civil wars, removed to the Castel Nuovo for greater security, and it is supposed has been irrecoverably lost, for no trace of it has been discovered; an inscription in Latin remains, which has been translated thus:—

> "In Mantua born, but in Calabria bred,
> Fair Naples owns me now; the past'ral charge,
> And agricultural toils and arms, I sung."

Had our gifted countryman, Byron, visited this spot, he would doubtless have left the impress of his glowing mind, and these flat lines would have been discarded for some bright emanation of his genius. He would have rendered some offering at the poet's grave more durable than the laurel planted by Petrarch, of which not a leaf remains, and more tangible than the promise Boccaccio made, when, kneeling beside it, according to his own account, he "felt suddenly seized by a sacred inspiration, and entered into a daring vow with himself that his name should not perish with him." Had he

carved that vow on marble or on brass, he could not have rendered it more durable than he has done by his many-pictured tales of life and manners, and by the services his indefatigable zeal effected for the cause of learning. I have read in Gibbon and elsewhere, that for all the moderns know of Greek they are indebted to Boccaccio, the business of whose life, in the midst of poverty and difficulties, was to save from destruction those manuscripts that, but for his exertions, never would have been recovered. He rescued valuable Greek writings from oblivion and probable annihilation, as Petrarch did those of many of the Latin authors. It is said that these two great men first met at the tomb of Virgil, and then commenced the friendship that ended but with their lives. Boccaccio, we are told, seemed to hear his own knell when informed that Petrarch was no more; he survived scarcely a year, and after all his wanderings and adventures, died at the retired house that was his father's, at Certaldo, near Florence.

The sepulchre, like an empty casket, no longer containing the jewel it was formed to hold, has now no ornament but such as are found in the thoughts of those who visit it, and in the field flowers and large-leaved acanthus that hang around in wild luxuriance. But the view from the spot makes all ornament superfluous. The city of Naples lies beneath, encircling the sea, whose deep tranquillity imparts a voluptuous beauty to the scene. Vessels gliding along, their sails catching the sunbeams and gentle breezes, look as if pleasure was their sole object, as they pursue their bright path along the water. In one direction, Vesuvius is beheld divested of all terrors, a soft, white, feathery vapour playing round its head, like the graceful plume on the warrior's helmet in "piping times of peace." In another direction are seen the Elysian fields where the poet sent the child of his genius to solve the enigma of the grave, and hold converse with departed spirits. Various besides are the objects of interest that come into view from the elevated

site, whence we could scarcely withdraw ourselves, for the drive we had proposed to take to Pozzuoli.

On descending to our carriage, we passed through the celebrated grotto of Posilipo, three quarters of a mile long, the origin of which has been variously accounted for. The common people, hearing of Virgil's fame, and ignorant of the magic of his verse, attributed the piercing of the mountain to his knowledge of the black arts, by means of which they believed he had achieved it in one night. The only circumstance, however, that in rational minds could countenance the popular belief is, that the height so immensely exceeds what is required for a mere passage. We must therefore, I think, incline to the opinion that it was used as a quarry, or give Virgil altogether the credit of it. Towards the centre it is lower than at either end; the whole length is dimly lighted by small lamps. On reaching half way, we perceived the representation of a Virgin and Child, better illuminated, which seemed placed there

to impress on the rustic moralist the truth, so important to us all to realize in our own breasts, that religion, the aspiration of the soul after heavenly things, cheers the dark passage of life.

On emerging from the grotto, (in England we should say tunnel,) a scene of brightness and beauty met our eyes in every direction, and we had a charming drive by the sea-side to the town of Pozzuoli, the place at which St. Paul stopped after the dreadful storm described in the twenty-eighth chapter of the Acts. In the fourteenth verse is mentioned his having tarried there seven days previously to going to Rome. He then probably saw standing in lofty magnicence the temple of Jupiter Serapis, which now lies in ruins; it was destroyed by one of the many earthquakes that have visited this place. The great mole, constructed by Agrippa to render Pozzuoli a convenient harbour, was destroyed in the same way. Some traces of it are still seen above the water. At no great distance from them is the Monte Nuovo, which,

about three hundred years ago, was in one night thrown up out of the bosom of the Lucrine lake.

The Terra di Lavoro, as it is called, would seem to have been at all periods subject to great transformations; for Virgil tells us—

> "Th' Italian shore
> And fair Sicilia's coast were one, before
> An earthquake caused the flaw; the roaring tides
> The passage made that land from land divides;
> And where the land retired, the rushing ocean rides.
> Distinguished by the straits on either hand,
> Now rising cities in long order stand,
> And fruitful fields; so much can time invade
> The mould'ring work that beauteous Nature made."

Time is indeed the grand invader of all below; and even where the earth has not been, as here, shaken to its foundations, nor its hidden fires burst forth destroying the works of man, where the footsteps of time are noiseless and stealthy as the thief who robs in darkness, yet, "triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace, scoffing." But here the usual progress of his

work has been anticipated; columns and pillars, destined by their artificers to last for ages, in the temple of Jupiter, were all prostrated by one of earth's momentary upheavings. Such of them as are unbroken are dispersed, and adorn churches and palaces elsewhere; a few only are remaining near their original site, and these, even by their solidity, attest the nothingness of the works of man when any collision with the elements drives them from their foundations, like chaff before the winds.

Sylla, it is said, often made Pozzuoli his place of residence after he resigned the dictatorship of Rome. The sulphureous baths in the neighbourhood were probably his inducement, for his bodily plagues were great, though they could scarcely be commensurate with his wickedness.

LETTER XIV.

Naples.

This morning we were to have gone on a distant excursion, but the clouds fell so low, and wore so lowering an aspect, that we gave up the projected expedition. We afterwards found the high cold wind rendered our driving about the streets disagreeable, even for a short time. Our Italian servant, hearing us exclaim at the sudden alteration in the weather, told us this month is especially liable to such fitful changes from one extreme to another, and it is said, " il mese di Marzo è un Pazzo."

In passing along the quays about four o'clock, we saw several distinct groups collected of the lower class of people, who were listening to reciters of the poetry of Petrarch, Ariosto, and

Tasso. Such *réunions*, I am told, are of daily occurrence, consisting of fishermen, whose habits alternate between periods of exercise and longer intervals of inaction than are usual amongst the labouring class. All, however, seem to find time enough for the cultivation of their taste for poetry.

The most numerous body of hearers stood around a man, who showed that he fully entered into the spirit of the poem, which describes the Christian enterprise to deliver Jerusalem. Although he was a cripple, his shoulders resting on crutches, which he could not flourish "to show how fields were won," his arms were free, and gave effect to most admirable and expressive recital, and his voice was full, rich, and varied in its tones. Had we not known that written poetry was falling from his lips, we could have imagined him an improvisitore under one of the highest inspirations of that class; in fact, this maimed son of Apollo proved, that if not possessed of the *furor poëticus*, he had at all events the talents of a first-rate actor.

But the attention of the ragged gentry in Naples is not given during the whole of the day to the charms of poetry, although the spirit of adventure may be excited thereby; for gentlemen who walk in the streets, (ladies never do so,) on returning home, generally find their pockets relieved of all previous contents. They are sure to be minus pocket-handkerchiefs. An Englishman of our acquaintance told us the following anecdote, as having, to his certain knowledge, occurred not long ago. A compatriot was robbed of his handkerchief in the Strada Toledo. An honest Italian saw the thief, and denounced him to the police. This man was instantly stabbed, and nearly killed, by an accomplice, who ran a stiletto into his back. The two criminals were tried and found guilty; the man convicted of larceny received twelve stripes, the other one hundred, and both were let loose amongst the crowd, who laughed heartily at the proceedings, especially that part when the executioner of the laws described the

offences for which the culprits were about to suffer such severe punishment.

The love of gaming is lamentably prevalent amongst the lower classes of Neapolitans. The children play for oranges in the streets, where men, dressed as citizens and soldiers, are frequently seen in groups sitting at cards. This unhappy passion no doubt leads to many crimes, the causes of protracted sufferings. Now tha capital punishments are done away with (excepting in some very rare instances) by the present king, prolonged confinement, and hard labour, under painful circumstances, are the substitutes, and of these there is always a remission of some years on the queen's giving birth to a child, or on a royal marriage. There is something pleasing in having the lowest classes participate in the happiness of the highest; but it can be hardly supposed that such casualties, influencing the condition of delinquents, can ultimately have a good effect on society. It is still the spirit of gambling, the essence of which is uncertainty, that gives them

hope within the prison; they look to chance for their release from that durance, to which chance has led them by the path of crime.

Of the better class of Neapolitans, we have received the most favourable impressions, never in our intercourse with them having experienced any but the most satisfactory conduct, and in some instances unusual politeness and honesty. We were lately at a shop, where the persons keeping it neither knew our names nor address, and we had only occasionally purchased a few small matters; in making a payment some change was to be given; the shopkeeper had none, and he insisted on our taking back the piastre we had offered, saying he would rather we remained in his debt, for then he should be sure of our returning to his shop:—a refined sort of compliment this, in its way. But a more substantial favour was done by a tradesman who returned three piastres that we had overpaid; and another took the trouble of bringing a gold chain and some ornaments that my daughters had very carelessly left on his counter.

He was a dealer in the same things, but these purchases had been made elsewhere; he fortunately knew our address, and lost no time in replacing the stray articles, even before they were missed.

The picturesque Lazzaroni are, I am happy to say, daily diminishing in number, owing to the improvement of their condition. They are not by any means so large a class, nor so distinct from the ordinary poor, as I believe they were formerly, and as I expected, from different accounts, to find them.

The person in whose house we have the good fortune, *pro tempore*, to be domiciled, on the Chiaja, is an Englishwoman, who has resided here for twenty-five years, and she assured me that she never found the least indisposition to work, on the part of the poor, and that they are always thankful for employment, with which the present government most creditably endeavours to supply them. But such was not always the case, and when thirty thousand destitute, able-bodied men denominated Lazzaroni were loose

upon society half-famished, (as the dogs are described to be in Constantinople,) surrounded by luxury and civilization, of none of the advantages of which they partook, it is, I think, a proof of their extreme mildness of character, that they never assumed the formidable aspect of the Janissaries in "The City of the Sultan." In my opinion, it is wonderful that there have not been many Masaniellos. Nothing but actual starvation here causes even an *emeute* amongst the suffering class. A very different temper might naturally have been engendered where a people have been peculiarly liable to an unsettled state of things, physical and moral.

The government here has partaken of the unquiet nature of the *terra di lavaro* over which it has been placed. In the same century in which the Normans paid us a memorable visit, "leaving their foot-prints on the sands of time," they came here professedly to assist the Greek colonists against the Saracens, and after various fortune, not so decisive at first as on our shores, established themselves as sovereigns of

this part of Italy. De Hauteville, an ancestor of Tancred, with whose exploits we have all been made familiar, in connexion with the holy sepulchre, was amongst the first who led the way. His gallant sons (of whom he had twelve) followed, and fixed their supremacy on the soil their swords had won; and for about two hundred years their descendants retained their conquest. The last of that race of heroes (who reckoned amongst them William Bras de Fer, Robert de Guischard, and others of note) was Count Roger, whose only child, Constantia, married the Emperor Henry the Sixth, son of Barbarossa the Suabian. We are, however, more especially familiar with his name, because of the sympathy excited in every young English breast for our gallant Richard Cœur de Lion, whom he treacherously detained prisoner on his way from the Holy Land. His cruelty obtained for him the surname of the severe. Probably private injuries, added to public wrongs, sharpened the detestation in which the Norman princess held her husband, for she poisoned him.

Frederick, the son of this princess, reigned during a long period over Naples and Sicily. On being called to the throne of the empire, he resigned his Italian dominions to his son Conrad; but Pope Innocent IV. claimed the city of Naples for the Holy See, on pretence that Frederick was excommunicated when he died. He had successfully resisted the encroachments of the Holy See in his dominions, and had thus called down its anathemas on his head. His sons Manfred and Conrad fought desperately for their rights. Manfred was killed at the battle of Benevento, in 1265. Conrad besieged Naples and took it, the inhabitants having endured much suffering at his hands. He died shortly after, leaving his inheritance to his son Conradin, whose melancholy fate I shall hereafter have occasion to notice.

From Frederick's death, in 1250, there followed a dismal period of fifteen years of strife, change, and invasion. At length Urban IV., (son of a shoemaker at Troyes,) having succeeded to the popedom, during his short reign

of three years, conferred the kingdom of Naples on Charles of Anjou, who, acceding to the pretensions of the Pope as feudal lord, and engaging to pay tribute, was crowned at Rome, 1266; contrary, some historians assert, to the remonstrances of his brother, Saint Louis, the king of France, who was too just to approve of the usurpation. The island of Sicily, in 1282, passed to Peter of Arragon, the husband of Manfred's daughter, and was released from the tyranny of the French occupants by their massacre, commonly designated the Sicilian Vespers, from the hour of the day when it occurred.

The crown of Naples remained with the descendants of Charles of Anjou until the death of Joan II., in 1435. She, like her unfortunate aunt Joan I., died childless; and being weak and vacillating, laid the foundation of fierce contests between the houses of Anjou and Arragon, of which Naples was, at different periods, the field of battle. She first declared the Duke of Anjou should be her successor, and afterwards

named Alphonso. The Spaniard by his sword maintained his claim, established himself on the throne, and received the surname of the Wise. He was succeeded by his illegitimate son, Ferdinand, who it was thought better deserved the cognomen given to his father. Many enlightened and good laws were created during his reign, but from his death, in 1494, a period of great wretchedness followed.

The sceptre of Naples next passed to the hands of no less than seven princes in about as many years. Louis XII. of France, and Ferdinand of Spain, combined to partition the country between them, and thus to settle their respective claims. Frederick, the king of Naples, perceiving he could make no head against such powerful antagonists, abdicated; and a contest arose between the successful sovereigns as to their several rights. At first they resorted to negociation to reconcile their differences, and it was proposed that the grandson of Ferdinand, an infant in his cradle, (afterwards the Emperor Charles V.,) should be betrothed to

Claude, the daughter of Louis, and that thenceforward the juvenile sovereigns should bear the title of king and queen of Naples. The Arch-Duke Philip (the father of Charles) repaired to Paris to further the project, the accomplishment of which, as the means of continuing at peace with the French king, he much desired; and supposing that matters were adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties, sent instructions to Gonsalvo di Cordova, to suspend the war he was waging in the kingdom of Naples, on the part of Ferdinand. But the great captain disregarded the mandate, having received no order to that effect from his master, who denied having granted such powers of treating with Louis as his son-in-law asserted had been entrusted to him. Accordingly war, in all its desolating processes, continued to rage, and the *campania felice*, as well as other parts of the country, exhibited a picture of the evils men's passions can inflict on scenes where Providence had stamped the impress of its beneficence. The flower of the chivalry of France, including

Bayard and his friend Sandricourt, on one side;—Gonzalvo, Navarro, and their persevering followers on the other, encountered in dread conflicts; and "few, few did part, where many met." The final issue was, that the Spanish general and his army, having performed such astounding feats of valour as amazed the world, drove the French beyond the Alps. Gaeta was the last strong position held by the latter in the Neapolitan dominions, the taking of which fortress concluded the military career of the great captain—an appellation by which Gonsalvo di Cordova has been recognised during succeeding centuries.

This hero, the disperser of armies, it is said, was so tenderly attached to his fair daughter Elvira, that she was the companion of his fortunes in "the tented field;" we may hope, therefore, that domestic life had compensations for him, which he did not receive according to his deserts from the sovereign he served so well, which circumstance gave rise to the opinion entertained by some, that Ferdinand was jealous

of the fame of the soldier who had made him sole master of one of the fairest portions of the globe.

The kingdom of Naples, laid prostrate and trampled on by contending armies, was henceforward, from the year 1504, governed, and ill-governed, by Spanish viceroys;—made a prey to the extortionate demands of pachas, who fleeced it, not only of money, but of every work of art that was from time to time brought to light. Fortunately the earth still remained closed over the buried cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, or their treasures too would have been sent with others to adorn the capital of the victor and his successors.

For nearly five centuries the possession of the kingdom of Naples had oscillated between the royal houses of France and Spain. The vice-regal administration was the worst form of government that had been inflicted on the suffering country. At length an end was put to the greater misrule of deputies, in 1734-5, by the

grandson of Louis XIV., Philip V. of Spain making his second son Charles, King of Naples; and in the same branch of the house of Bourbon the sovereignty has continued ever since, with the exception of the interval, during which Bonaparte's phantom kings, Joseph and Murat, wore the kingly crown.

Not only the kingdom of Naples, but the whole of Italy, presented a melancholy spectacle at the period when France and Spain were putting forward their rival pretensions. That beautiful country, like the fabled Phœnix, had risen from its ashes, since Goths, Vandals, and Huns had steeped it in unnumbered woes, but the barbarians could not always resist the kindly influences of nature and art by which they were surrounded, their descendants forming close connexion with the enlightened natives of the soil, were new-modelled by altered circumstances, and by the clime, "whose sun-enlivened ether, wakes the soul to higher powers." It was said, that where the invader's horse had stamped its

foot the grass would never grow; but Italy's fertile shores again bloomed. Commerce rolled the treasures of the East into its busy harbours,

> "And sculpture, painting, architecture, bent
> From ancient models to restore their arts,
> Returned."

The ample pages of long-lost treasures of knowledge were by means of diligent and anxious exertions, again unfolded, and from ancient wisdom was borrowed new. Universities, pre-eminent in art and science, were established, and sent forth historians, philosophers, and, above all, poets of the highest order. Navigators, of daring souls, explored unknown regions, one of whom discovered a new world, whilst another sublime spirit traversed the starry hemisphere, and disclosed its hidden wonders to mankind.

And here let me ask—Wherefore, when her sons were led on in such various paths by the

hand of Genius, was the surpassing civilization of Italy, a second time overcome and conquered by brute force? The reply is—Because Italy was as a house divided against itself. The import of the fable of the bundle of sticks was not well understood, or at all events not acted on. A common enemy, with which time and chance occasionally afflict other countries, would have been a light evil in comparison with that plague with which it was familiar,—enemies swarming at home, bred within its own parental arms; each petty state thought only of its individual narrow and immediate interests, and looked upon its neighbour's welfare or aggrandizement with envy and jealousy. While other kingdoms were consolidating their powers, Italy was frittering hers away by internal strife;—Genoa waged war upon Venice, and *vice versâ;*—Rome intrigued with one foreign sovereign after another, using spiritual weapons for temporal purposes, to despoil Italian princes. Patriotism was extinct, and private virtue at a low

ebb. Intense selfishness was the ruling passion, and to its baneful effects the French and Germans owed their desolating triumphs over the land that nature had done everything to render a paradise. The Genius of Liberty mournfully asks,—

> "Are these the vales, that once, exulting states
> In their warm bosom fed? The mountains these,
> On whose high blooming sides my sons of old,
> I bred to glory? The dejected towns
> Where mean and sordid life can scarce subsist,
> The scenes of ancient opulence, and pomp?
> Come! by whatsoever sacred name disguis'd,
> Oppression, come, and in thy works rejoice."

Guelphs and Ghibelines, Bianchi and Neri, what have you not to answer for!

But surely this land, "bright as the summer," will not always remain thus fallen. The present torpor will doubtless pass away, and Italy will again rise as before—the light of the world.

> . . . . . "Italy,
> Time which hath wrong'd thee with ten thousand rents

Of thy imperial garment, shall deny,
And hath denied, to every other sky,
Spirits which soar from ruin :—thy decay
Is still impregnate with divinity."

LETTER XV.

Naples.

We have been to-day to Solfaterra, which lies a little to the right of Pozzuoli, and never was I in so strange and fearful a place. This part of the neighbourhood of Naples certainly does not deserve to share the appellation of "un pezzo di cielo caduto in terra,"—for it might rather be taken for a specimen of what Hamlet designates "the other place!" In fact, a learned Neapolitan writer has declared his opinion that it is one of the mouths of the infernal regions; and truly appearances would seem to justify the conjecture. The more distant authorities, however, of poetic fable, mention it as having been the scene of battle between Hercules and the giants, and afterwards used as Vulcan's assem-

bly room. Whatever it may have been, it is at present a large flat enclosure of considerable extent, entirely surrounded by steep hills; the ground is composed of loose white ashes; the sides of the hills appear to consist of the same, though vegetation struggles there for a location, and tries to cover them with a scanty mantle of dingy green.

In one part of the level space is a large building, in which is carried on the celebrated manufacture of sulphur; it has numerous chimneys protruding from the sides of the walls, all smoking. I entered it; but the difficulty of breathing that ensued made me run out instantly. We marvelled how the poor men could remain as we saw them at work. I suppose that they have either no lungs, or that they have become *acclimaté* to the dreadful atmosphere. Judging by my own sensations, I am inclined to the former hypothesis! Why may not some persons be without lungs, as well as others "without a heart"—which we often hear confidently asserted? Certain it is, however, whether with or without

lungs, that only very young and robust men can support such occupation even for a short time.

Connecting the appalling miseries of killed and wounded, (from the contemplation of which, even in idea, the affrighted imagination shrinks,) with the manufacture of sulphur, one of the constituents of gunpowder, this scene appears to me, notwithstanding ancient and modern authorities, as more resembling the devil's workshop than anything else; enabling men to extend widely the horrors of carnage, and to drench the fair and pleasant fields given us for enjoyment and support with the blood of our fellow-creatures. I think it had been much better if our pugnacious propensities had no vent but in the confined use of the bows and arrows of former times, that now serve only for the healthful pastime of young ladies and gentlemen, instead of the fulminating, detonating engines that we owe to the vaunted discovery of the 15th century.

On leaving the sulphur manufactory, alias

Pandemonium, we went a short distance to see the process of alum-making. Deep stone basins of water are placed beneath a covered shed; these are kept boiling by the natural heat of the ground, and the deposit becomes alum. Steam arose around them in all directions, just as if they were over a furnace. From the side of one of the hills we also saw the same kind of smoke or steam proceeding. On putting our hands to an aperture near the boiling water, we found the steam that issued thence so hot that we could not suffer our hands to remain in contact with the scorching vapour.

The guide told us that during an eruption of Vesuvius, the smoke and subterranean heat of the Solfaterra exceedingly decrease, its latent fires no doubt being in requisition elsewhere. A large stone was thrown several times on the ground, from whence a hollow sound reverberated as though a great chasm was below a thin surface, and it set the ashes on which we were standing, shaking very perceptibly.

It is said that when Murat was king, he had

the ground penetrated, and at the depth of forty feet boiling water was reached. It was not without some reason that the ancients called the shores of the bay of Naples, Phlegræi Campi, or burnt fields.

Never did I see a more awful place than the extinct volcano of Solfaterra, if extinct it can be called, whilst sending from subterranean fires heat that will burn and destroy whatever comes in its way not properly defended. One could imagine that some wretched town had met the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose ashes lay still smoking around. And yet such is the almost indomitable power of vegetation, that even here grows a dwindled heath, putting forth white blossoms like the flowers of death.

On the highest point of one of the adjacent hills stands a solitary, gloomy gothic tower. It is probably the residence of the superintendent of the labourers employed in the sulphur and alum works below. I could fancy it to have been a refuge for any who survived the destructive flames that have apparently turned the

green earth, and all that it inherits, into dust and ashes.

On leaving the precincts, that looked cursed by peculiar wrath, we quickly reached an elevated point from whence we beheld one of the most beautiful scenes that imagination can picture, all bathed in glowing sunshine; the bay of Naples outstretched; the city, situated in a curve like Diana's crescent; steep hills behind partly built on, and intermixed with trees; before us, islands near and distant, and promontories protruding boldly forward. Such a glorious contrast do these afford to the blasted scene we had just left, that if our faith were not firmly fixed on the "Rock of Ages," the supreme Lord of all, we might have been in danger of contemplating, as founded in possibility, the opinion of the Gnostics, that there are two opposite powers in the universe, good and evil, holding divided empire.

We returned to the Strada Nuovo. On the rocks that projected over the road we observed the purple stock growing luxuriantly; the rich

perfume of its flowers was wafted to us by the sea-breezes.

If I were to say that there is any want at Naples it is of the common green turf; there are an abundance of flowers, and a sufficiency of trees; amongst the latter, dark evergreens are especially numerous. There are also plenty of mutilated, disfigured stumps destined to support the vines; and when these latter are in leaf, they doubtless hide the defects of the partners allotted to them;—like beautiful and good-tempered wives, whose charms are employed to conceal the defects of crabbed, ill-favoured spouses. But the greenness so delightful in our own country, and above all others in Switzerland, where the unwearied eye revels in it for ever, is not to be found here.

* * * * *

Our servant Eugene recommended that we should not make arrangements for going to any distance, during even the beginning of next week, (Holy week,) as assuredly there will be a great deal of boisterous weather; the anniversary

of the period of our Lord's sufferings being always marked, he says, by "Cattivo tempo!" There is something very touching in the belief that Nature, which made such dread manifestations at the crucifixion of our Saviour, still shows signs of disturbance as the revolving year brings round the period when the great sacrifice for man was made, when the earth trembled, the light was turned into darkness, and the graves gave up their dead.

* * * * *

Eugene, who,

> "Like the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind,"

had his anticipations as to the "cattivo tempo" fully realized at the commencement of this week; as were ours also, though we founded our expectation on different data; the equinoctial gales being then due; and very punctually they arrived, in such force as to render the usually tranquil waves before our windows uproarious. On Thursday, however, the jarring elements were at rest and all was again calm.

From an early hour in the morning not a carriage was to be seen; from that time the use of all kinds of vehicles in the city is prohibited until the afternoon of Saturday: and the silence now reigning in these commonly most noisy of all streets is deeply impressive, associated as it is with the solemn occasion.

On Thursday morning there was high mass performed in the King's chapel, at which the Archbishop assisted. It is a very beautifully decorated building. The doors were freely thrown open to all comers, but so great were the attractions in several other places of worship, that it was not by any means too crowded.

The royal family attended, dressed in deep mourning, as was every body else. The music was very fine. The evening before we had heard in the church of San Pietro, the Miserere of Zingarelli, which is allowed to be a masterly composition; and on the morning of Wednesday the "sette parole" of Haydn was executed at the Musical College in a style of great excellence.

From the early dawn of Thursday, services were being performed in every church in Naples, except at short intervals, until a late hour at night. Although the sun (as if in complaisance to the popular feeling) was veiled in sombre clouds, the churches had the windows universally darkened, the interior being dimly lighted with candles, until the evening, when they exhibited a blaze of light: music and services at the altar continuing till after twelve o'clock.

At three o'clock on Thursday a grand procession issued from the palace in the centre of the town. First, a regiment of servants in full-dress liveries, walking three or four abreast, immediately preceded the civil officers of state; these were followed by different military corps dressed in the greatest variety of beautiful uniforms I ever saw, vying, in the splendour of their colours, with the plumage of tropical birds. In general it soon becomes tiresome to look at a great body of troops if they are only walking, without performing any military evolutions; but here the dresses were so different both in form

and colour, and so rich, that it was quite another affair. There were, I conjecture, specimens exhibited on this occasion of the habiliments of the soldiers of every part of northern, as well as of southern Europe.

Then came the king, walking like the rest. The queen, and queen-mother were on either side of his majesty, who wore a military uniform. The ladies were dressed in mourning, their long velvet trains borne by gentlemen. Numerous princesses followed, their brothers and husbands accompanying them.

Next came a set of most highly ornamented, unoccupied sedan-chairs, bearing on the outside crowns and other insignia; liveried lacqueys surrounded them: I suppose these were in readiness in case the inclemency of the weather should render shelter necessary for any of the royal pedestrians. To the sedan-chairs succeeded the same number of troops (all carrying their arms reversed) as had preceded them, and in equally magnificent costume; each regiment had a band that performed only *sotto voce*;

the muffled drums being faintly heard. The king was bareheaded, as likewise were all but the ladies, who wore long black veils. The appearance of so many royal ladies on foot gave a fine antique effect to the whole proceeding. They were not in the least incommoded by the thronging populace, between whom and the cortège no barrier was placed; nor were the streets lined either with soldiers or police; the people of their own accord kept at a proper and respectful distance.

The procession passed through the street of the Toledo; and the royal family, before they returned in the same order to the palace, visited, and made obeisance at, seven churches. We were in a well-situated balcony in the Toledo, which circumstance has enabled me to give so particular an account of the whole affair. The usually gay debonair populace were as orderly and sedate as possible; impressed, no doubt, with the solemnity of the occasion, they behaved themselves suitably to their mourning garb, for all who could afford it were dressed in black,

which was the case also on the following Friday, when there was an entire absence of the previous ceremonies and performances in the churches. If practised at all, one would suppose these ceremonies particularly called for on the commemoration of that great day that consummated the work of redemption; but such cessation of observances always occurs among the Roman Catholics. I can only account for this by supposing the sense of awe to be so profound as to suspend all attempts at ordinary modes of celebration;—with the same feeling (to make a most unworthy comparison, having reference to the ceremonies only) that the Grecian painter depicting the horror and grief of the attendants on Iphigenia at the moment of sacrifice, concealed her father's countenance as beyond his art to give it suitable expression.

As ceremonies are not what we unimaginative English lay much stress upon, we resorted to our own church, where service was well performed and fully attended.

During the Holy week, I understand the al-

moners of the royal family are much employed in the distribution of alms and donations to individuals and charitable institutions. Of the latter there is no dearth in this city; and some of them are superintended and conducted in the best manner by the higher classes, who, be it spoken to their honour, give more personal attendance to such matters, than is often done by those of a similar grade in other cities. There is an immense establishment for the poor, admirably well managed, we have been told, where all beggars are received, well fed, clothed, and made to work. We understand that Naples has undergone great improvements as regards the condition of the poor within the last ten or twelve years, and as far as I can judge of the interior of their houses, they are by much the most cleanly we have seen in Italy. Along the Strada Nuovo, where the fishermen have scooped dwellings in the sides of the rock through which the road is cut, we have often been struck by the neatness of the beds and the whiteness of the linen.

I must not forget to mention the excellent establishment there is here (worthy of imitation) for decayed servants. It is supported by the higher classes.

LETTER XVI.

Naples.

Easter Sunday being now over, the streets have resumed their usual aspect; offering the most complete contrast imaginable to those of Rome, the quietness of which is most remarkable. At the latter place I have often been struck, not only by the stillness, but by the scowling glance of pedestrians, whose cloaks, wrapped around them with a peculiar and misanthropic air, so as in part to cover the mouth and lower portion of the face, give the idea of persons who are gloomily indignant at strangers coming among them.

The streets in Naples, on the contrary, at all times wear the bustling, animated appearance, which other towns exhibit during an election or

some great public festival; the sounds and sights that abound are of every variety of description. I am first awoke at an early hour of the morning by the tinkling of bells placed on the necks of droves of goats passing through the streets: at a later hour these are generally succeeded by groups of Calabrian peasants more than half clothed in sheepskins, who perform to a pipe and zampogna a sort of dance, wild as their own appearance: priests accompanying juvenile sets of choristers, with open books in their hands, and wearing an air of abstraction from worldly things as great as if they were under fretted vaults, and pacing long-drawn aisles, are chanting and moving in one direction, while Punchinello screeches and excites roars of laughter in another. Open and closed carriages, of the handsomest description, filled by the rich and gay, mingle with those of a commoner kind, which are in great request, and are not unlike our market carts, always crowded with jocund, mirthful, ragamuffins; sometimes as many as eight and ten cram themselves toge-

ther, or cling by exterior portions of the crazy vehicle, while the one horse attached to it, as if to compensate him for being driven at the top of his speed, is decked out in feathers, often a bunch of the peacock's stuck at one ear, whilst the part of the mane near the forehead is twisted so as to stand upright, and bedecked with many coloured tapes or ribbons; and wherever room can be found for them, the harness glitters with double rows of bright brass nails.

In close proximity with these extraordinary machines and their noisy fare, is often met the funeral *cortège.* On the bier lies exposed to view the deceased person, who is being carried to the grave, and who looks rather like one coming thence to admonish a thoughtless world. The funeral of a priest is conducted differently; the body is covered with a black pall, and placed within a carriage like an omnibus, only with open sides; four priests sit one in each corner, holding a light: there are lights also about the carriage, the *tout ensemble* of which is a most lugubrious affair.

The sombre impression produced on the mind by the spectacle just described, is sure to be dissipated by some immediate counteracting influence, perhaps by pressingly offered flowers sweet and bright, that speak to one of the youth and freshness of a primeval world, and which seem to promise that Paradise is not lost to us, though we are for awhile bound to the turmoil of earth.

At the corner of every street, and indeed wherever there is room to place them, are stalls made gay not only by fruits and flowers, but also by painting and various other decorations. Suppose a table, the lower part, front and sides made solid, and having a canopy overhead supported by four pillars; the whole surmounted by a picture of the Virgin. Strings of oranges and lemons hang all around in festoons, after the manner of beads or shells on the body of an Indian chief. At the base is painted some scripture story, and according, I imagine, to the attractiveness of the whole apparatus are the numbers that wait on the presiding lady, who

stands at the back, and deals out cooling liquors, iced waters and cooling lemonade to her humble customers. What becomes of the ambulatory shop in the night I do not know; I suppose it walks off on four wheels to some place of security, like an animal to its lair.

There being no *trottoirs* for pedestrians, all the variety the streets contain are thrown into a *mêlée* that is most amusing to us who view it from our carriage, for it is inadmissible in point of etiquette, and impossible in point of fact, for ladies ever to walk the streets. They find compensation, however, in the extensive and beautiful promenade opposite to our windows, where the bustle of horses and carriages, and of buyers and sellers, is excluded; there refreshing exercise may be enjoyed by the side of the tideless sea that never departs thence, but flows on, its waves varying in sound with every passing breeze, and its surface partaking of every changing hue lent to it by the canopy above.

We went yesterday a distance of a few miles to see what is called Virgil's School. Not that the

poet ever acted the part of Jedediah Cleishbotham; but the tradition is, that he was there initiated in the lore, without which perchance he might have been "mute and inglorious," and never have become his country's pride, nor incited youths unnumbered to cultivate the charms of divine poetry.

> "Nurse revered
> Of generous counsels and heroic deeds."

On alighting at a door which was immediately unlocked, several mendicant *ragazzi* offered their services as guides, one of whom was made happy by being allowed to run before us, on a path leading down a very steep hill covered with vines, as were also the finely diversified rising grounds adjoining. We had not been long *en route* before we came to some late excavations where we saw standing many dilapidated pillars, and still compact basement stories. It is the opinion of well-informed persons that these *débris* have been, by the labour of man, uncovered before, and that some second earthquake reburied them.

After pausing sufficient time to satisfy our curiosity, we proceeded along a rapid descent to a rocky promontory, were we looked upon the site of Virgil's School. We found it quite inaccessible; schoolmasters did not, it appears, in his tyro days go much "abroad." We saw some remains of a dwelling and of a rude staircase, venerated from the idea that it was once trod by the young poet of Mantua.

Not far from this spot is the *bona fide* dwelling of a hermit; around it on all sides are huge bold masses of rocks, some rising precipitously out of the sea. Small boats which pass in that direction find it convenient, probably on account of the depth of the water, to steer between some of these and the hermit's abode. A projecting stick, having a basket attached to it, hangs forward towards the sea, not to catch fish as an ignoramus might suppose, but to receive the seaman's contribution; and no boat ever glides past without each one on board dropping into it a small donation. A figure of the hermit is

placed on a higher point, to remind the wayfarer of his duty to himself and his neighbours.

Hermits and monks, considered by us as superfluous gentry in the present era, are, we must admit, valuable, if in no other way, by adding much picturesque variety to the external forms of society, that are fast becoming too uniform and monotonous; whilst, at a dark period, the latter at least proved important members of the community from having made their retired cloisters storehouses of learning, creating or guarding treasures that would either never have existed, or would have been dissipated but for the safe lodgment found in their well-ordered cells.

We saw the hermit who has led me into this train of thinking; he was clothed in a franciscan monk's dress, and walking on the little beach near to his dwelling. So magnificent is the surrounding scenery, it inclines one to hope that in his solitude he finds

> "There is a rapture on a lonely shore,
> There is society where none intrudes,
> By the deep sea, and music in its roar."

In bending our steps homeward, we stopped at the elegant villa of Mr. Keppel Craven. The situation is so eminently beautiful that but little room is left for embellishment, and that little is added in the best possible manner. We also alighted at the Duke de Rocca Romamana's residence, situated on a steep declivity overhanging the bay. Infinite pains have been well bestowed to render it attractive in different ways; shrubs and flowers are disposed most gracefully, not only out of doors, but also in several apartments appropriated to birds and other animals, stuffed so well, that they appear still alive, luxuriating amongst the products of the vegetable world in which they most delighted. Fruits, flowers, and foliage are so successfully imitated, that the feathered tribe, squirrels, &c., for whom such treasures are spread around, seem to be the happiest of their kind. Other apartments are occupied, not by stuffed, but by living specimens, unconfined by cages, tenants of ample-sized rooms divided by fine wire network into compartments; and low down in a

cavern amongst the rocks, is a species of extraordinary and beautiful fish, not unlike good-sized trout, having wings (not fins, as you might suppose) of the most brilliant hues, shaded from light clear azure, to the colour of *lapis lazuli* and deep violet. They rise with incredible swiftness to the surface, from the bottom of the water, where they exhibit their wondrous brilliancy. I marvelled whether these were the same blue fish, or the descendants of those whom the Princess Carathis, mother of the renowned Caliph Vathek, consulted for their reputed prophetic lore, and who, being duly exorcised, replied, "From gills to tails we are yours; what seek ye to know?" But I, not possessing the occult learning, or wishing to share anything, even knowledge, in common with that dread lady, did not venture to open my lips, lest I should hear that "from gills to tails" the small blue creatures before us might be willing to obey; although, to say the truth, in their quick flittings to and fro, I could perceive no symptoms of pro-

bable submission to commands. By means of grated doors, the sea is made at all times to pass gently through their abode; and like a ferocious animal that has had its fangs drawn, it can never display any injurious roughness towards the inmates of the reservoir.

After seeing the two charming villas belonging to Mr. Craven and the Duke de Rocca Romamana, we alighted for a few moments to look at the dilapidated unroofed palace at no great distance that was once owned by the unfortunate Joan I., Queen of Naples. Eugène informed us, it belongs at present to the king, who will not suffer it to be restored, although occupying one of the most beautiful situations that can be imagined; he added also that this palace was built by the "Cattiva Regina;" for as such the unfortunate queen is handed down to posterity by the vulgar.

It seems very strange how such gross calumnies as have attached a lasting stigma to her name could have been propagated with respect to her, though of the crime laid to her charge

she was fully and honourably acquitted by her contemporaries, with the exception of the relatives and partisans of her unfortunate husband, Andrew of Hungary, a man all accounts agree in representing as coarse, brutal, and ill-tempered, and that his rude, supercilious manners, and the haughty bearing of his followers, (especially of his governor, a Hungarian monk, Fra Rupert, of whose rudeness and coarseness Petrarch has made mention,) disgusted the Neapolitan nobility. These latter, intending to confer a great kindness on the queen, by ridding her of an unworthy husband, and themselves of an intolerable master, on one of the evenings when a brilliant *soirée* was given in the palace, strangled the prince in his own apartment, and threw him from the battlements. There are, however, no just grounds for believing that the queen was in any degree cognizant of, or accessory to, this horrible transaction. Young as she was, scarcely eighteen years of age, and approaching the period of her first confinement, nature rejects the idea of

giving credit on insufficient authority to such atrocity.

On the crime being laid to her charge, she openly denied and resented the cruel imputation, and appealed to the Pope in person, who was, by-the-bye, deeply interested in her condemnation, for some years before, on the death of her grandfather, King Robert, the Papal See made strenuous exertions to get possession of her dominions, her right to which would assuredly have been forfeited, if she could have been proved guilty.

Notwithstanding the unfavourable bias to which interested motives might have been expected to give rise, when the queen repaired to Avignon, and there met her accusers, she repelled the foul charge so convincingly, in a solemn assembly, consisting of the Pope, all the cardinals and judges, that they unanimously acquitted her of having any knowledge of, participation or connivance in, the death of the prince. Her youthful simplicity doubtless acted powerfully in her behalf. She frankly acknow-

ledged that she disliked and lived unhappily with her husband; but instead of enlarging on his detestable qualities, she attributed their disunion to witchcraft. It is remarkable that all the writers who lived near her time, including Giannone, (said to be the best authority of his day,) concurred in the opinion of her innocence.

Two years after her acquittal, the queen married her cousin, the Prince of Tarento, who, though they had been separated, loved her from childhood. He too, and it appears no less unjustly, has shared in the obloquy cast upon her at a later period. They lived most happily together for several years; no witchcraft disturbed their union—until a power more potent dissolved it by his death. She subsequently twice married, probably from political motives, and feeling unequal to the undivided cares of government; she had no child to share the burthen. Her attachment was unbounded to a younger sister and her family, who usually resided with her. Charles de Durazzo, her bro-

ther-in-law, professed such sense of obligation and strong affection, that he was in the habit of calling her by the endearing name of mother; yet, notwithstanding all her claims upon him, he allowed himself to be made the instrument of her destruction.

At the period when there were rival Popes, she favoured the unsuccessful candidate, and his opponent, being seated in the chair of St. Peter's, united with her old enemies, the Hungarian family, to attack Naples. She was taken prisoner, and suffocated in the Castel Nuovo, by order of Charles de Durazzo, who hoped to get immediate possession of the throne, which might have been his at no distant period had he waited for the natural decease of his kinswoman and benefactress. He met his reward by falling a victim to the perfidy of those with whom he was associated against her. "Thus even-handed justice commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice to our own lips."

The tomb of Andrew of Hungary in the ca-

thedral, bearing the Latin inscription, which inculpates the queen,

"Joannæ uxoris dolo et laqueo necato, 1345,"

is not a testimony of the least weight, when we consider that Charles de Durazzo's children ascended her throne, contrary to the *last* will of their unfortunate aunt. Ladislaus was acknowledged king, and was succeeded by his sister, Joan II., whose name is handed down merely as that of a weak woman, not possessing one of the fine, elevated, or fascinating qualities of her murdered predecessor, the fondly-attached sister of her mother.

Doubtless to vindicate his father's memory, and more especially to substantiate his own right to the throne, Ladislaus would not scruple to criminate, as far as a lying epitaph could do so, the name of the queen, who appointed another heir, and owed her violent death to his father; and no successor has since been on the throne who could reasonably be supposed to take much interest in her vindication. The King of

Arragon succeeded to the crown after the death of Joan II., contrary to the pretensions of the house of Anjou, from which she was in the maternal line descended.

Joan I. had another sister besides the Duchess de Durazzo, — she was illegitimate, — nevertheless, the fair Lady Mary was a prime favourite with the queen, of whose court she formed a constant and brilliant inmate. Her attractions drew thither the enamoured Boccaccio, whose sentiments, an old writer says, she fully returned, on account of "sa belle plume et son beau dire." He was besides handsome, and often called upon to assist the mistress of his soul in all suitable observances when she presided, as frequently happened, at courts of love and tournaments, as the Queen of Beauty. He has celebrated her with "sa belle plume," under the appellation of Fiammetta. It is conjectured from one of his sonnets, that her death emancipated him from Love's fetters, before he left Naples to return to his native home, a year or two previously to the horrid catastrophe which

terminated the gay and brilliant amusements of that court, to the *agrémens* of which, it is said, the witty Florentine largely contributed, particularly by the first recital, in the queen's coteries, of the Tales of the Decameron, although another origin was afterwards attributed to them.

As I looked around the ruined palace, its large doorways, where no doors remain, opening to vast apartments and blackened walls, where probably banqueting and revelry had been held with great pomp and circumstance—the fancied contrast of things as they were, with the present hideous desolation, had somewhat the appalling effect on the imagination of lightning momentarily flashing through midnight gloom and darkness.

LETTER XVII.

POMPEII.

Naples.

We formed a most agreeable party to visit Pompeii, in company with some friends, whose acquaintance was made during our stay at Rome, a circumstance which we consider as amongst the best fruits of our travels, and not likely, I hope, to end with them. The day fixed on for our excursion was very fine. We left Naples before nine o'clock; and our road lay through Portici, where the king has a palace, that, I understand, is never visited by any of the royal family, except on occasion of the death of one of its members. This house of mourning, with all its appendages of park and gardens, and also a pretty considerable town, are built directly

over the city of Herculaneum, which lies from seventy to a hundred feet entombed beneath the surface; six or seven different eruptions of lava having elevated the ground. The number of the eruptions is ascertained by the layers of soil lying between the beds of lava. The accidental circumstance of a peasant's endeavouring to sink a pump, led to the awful disclosure of a buried city. Only a small portion of it has been excavated, lest the superstructure, the town of Portici, might fall a sacrifice; but that small portion, besides houses, disclosed a theatre, exceeding in size that of St. Carlo, which is the largest in Europe, and many of the greatest treasures of art that have been discovered were found in the comparatively little space which has been yet penetrated, and unless Portici should be destroyed at some future time by the same fearful process that, A. D. 79, placed Herculaneum in Cimmerian darkness, there is no likelihood that any further researches will be made, notwithstanding the temptation of the

superb acquisitions in bronze and marble that rewarded former labours.

After leaving Portici, and a succession of small villages *en suite*, our road lay through a tract of country from whence lava had banished every symptom of vegetation, "making the green one" black; all around looked partly composed of dark mould that had been turned up by the plough, and partly of cinders. Vesuvius lies to the left, "the monarch of all he surveys"—in that direction at least. With the eagerness of tempest-tossed sailors, who first descry land after contemplating only dread manifestations of power around them, we hailed with pleasure the sight of verdure; some trees were putting forth their tender green leaves—they are willows, appropriately placed at the entrance to the Street of Tombs. This avenue of death lies directly outside the ancient walls of Pompeii; on either side are marble tombs, many of them of the oblong square description that are placed above our family vaults, orna-

mented a good deal with sculptured flowers and leaves. These, perhaps, were to indicate the hope entertained even by pagans, that an eternal spring, after the long winter of death, would call forth the enshrined dust again into form and beauty. It is a great advantage that the tombs have not been removed from their original site. Some pieces of marble lie there, in the decoration of which the sculptor's chisel had been employed, but had left its task incomplete; the work was evidently in progress, when he who was preparing the tomb for another was buried himself.

We then proceeded through the once gay and busy streets of Pompeii, the inhabitants of which, according to tradition, were, like their degenerate kinsmen of Greece, a most pleasure-loving people. Innumerable streets of roofless houses, crossed by other streets, met our view in all directions; the greater part, judging from their moderate size in general, were the dwellings of a middling class, such as are not often found of great antiquity elsewhere. Of the

buildings of past ages, for the most part vestiges of those only that were great and massive, whether destined for public or private purposes, exist at the present day, and they are marked by the processes of decay made gradually by the great innovator, Time, or have been hastened into ruin by the rude shocks of war, and the wanton violence of barbarians, such as combined to desecrate the temples and palaces of Rome. But far different are the remains of Pompeii, which present the only specimens perhaps extant, of ruin without decay, excepting that some portion of Herculaneum has been brought to light in the same manner.

Vesuvius, in one dread night, (A. D. 79,) plunged this living city in utter darkness. Nearly two thousand years elapsed, during which period new countries rose to splendour and greatness, whilst the incumbent load of ashes lay unmoved from this buried but not prostrate city; the walls are standing, and in a wonderful state of preservation; they were filled up by the lava and ashes that bore down every roof,

with one or two exceptions, at once destroying that portion of the houses, whilst it kept the remainder unharmed by the elements. No storms or rain entered there to obliterate the exquisite decorations which had their origin in Grecian art.

The houses are painted in a plain manner (generally red) at the outside, but within most tastefully, on a thick coating of stucco or composition, which received a high polish on the surface, forming an admirable ground for the disporting of birds amongst flowers, which still, painted as they are on the walls, look as if no long night of centuries had interposed its darkness between them and the sunshine and fresh breezes that have, during the last fifty years, revisited them, along, too, with less kindly influences, which, however, have done these gay productions less detriment than could be supposed by any one who had not personal opportunity of admiring the glowing hues of these bright creations.

The mosaic pavements of most of the houses

are perfect as ever; in many instances not one of the tiny particles of which they are composed has been displaced by the avalanche of ashes, if I may so speak, that annihilated equally the lofty dome and the lowly roof. The houses of Sallust, of Cicero, of Diomede, and of Panza, were of a large and handsome order, as were others also whose owners are unknown to fame. In the centre of this larger description of dwelling was a square, the covering of which was supported by pillars. It is said, on good authority, that the guests of the mansion assembled in the largest apartment, as formerly in the halls of our castles when the wassail bowl went round, but instead of the blazing yule log, that assisted in warming and cheering our northern revellers, a fountain here threw up its cooling waters for purposes of beauty and refreshment.

In some of the adjacent rooms we occasionally observed at one end a bow containing spaces for three windows—a common shape with us. The bed chambers, as our guide called them,

that are yet extant are all small, and the stairs (in many instances sound and good) which led to the upper and destroyed apartments, are small likewise.

The pillars of several temples are partly standing. They were made of brick, so formed as to be fluted, and when covered with the same incomparable stucco that overlaid the walls, must have had the appearance of marble; the bases on which they rest are three or four feet in depth, polished, and painted red.

There are several admirably made public baths, some prepared for the using of cold water, and others for being warmed by vapour. One or two of these are in perfect preservation, and not unroofed; these being the only specimens of roofs that have escaped the otherwise common destruction.

Wells of water were evidently in great request. These are surmounted by cylinders of marble nearly a yard in height, which are just as perfect and firmly set as when first made, and bear such an impression of being worn by

the ropes used in drawing the water, (which of course was dried up,) as I have been told prove that the ropes must have moved thereon for centuries to have occasioned such deeply indented marks.

After wandering and wondering until somewhat fatigued, we reached the Forum, where our utmost admiration was excited by the forlorn grandeur of the place. It is a great oblong square, and must have been at least four times as large, judging from present appearances, as was the principal Forum at Rome, in close vicinity to which were many of the principal public buildings comprised in so small a compass that a modern inquirer is perplexed to understand where they could have found sufficient space. But of the existence of some of those edifices there are no traces, except in records of unquestionable authority, that leave no doubt of their having been so situated.

At Pompeii there were probably not several Forums, as at Rome, and most likely not more than the large one before mentioned. On the

four sides were magnificent public buildings, not drawn closely together, but allowed "ample room and verge enough." The ground-plans of the Basilica, of the senate-house, and of different temples, can be traced on the spot, as many portions of the walls still remain, and fully attest how grand a spectacle the whole must have once exhibited.

On the *débris* of some fallen pillars we sat down, and on others our servants placed the contents of baskets, which, in the spirit of the trusty Sancho, they had well filled for our use. Whilst partaking of our refreshing meal, I thought we looked like a set of Arabs that had located near Palmyra, or in some desert where a proud city had once claimed empire.

Vesuvius, dark and fearful, was before us, overlooking the mighty destruction it had achieved; from its summit waved a gently moving column of smoke, like the flag on a castle that announces the chieftain's presence —behind us, at a little distance, was the sea. Thus hemmed in, Pompeii could never have

enjoyed "the pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;" vines and hot-bed productions it might have had in perfection.

On quitting the forum, we passed through two theatres, the tragic and comic, and also through an amphitheatre. Buildings for these same purposes have been so often described that I will not trouble you with an account of them; a general similarity prevailed amongst the different species in ancient times.

Having had rather a hard day's work, we were glad to reach our carriages, and in returning we saw Vesuvius wearing a different aspect. A mantle of purple (like the hue that heath gives to distant mountains) was lent to it by the setting sun; and from its cloud cap proceeded a white vapour, that had, as I observed before, the effect of Marabout feathers.

On the top of a high hill, that stands frightfully near the great destroyer, are a convent and church, no other building being near them; a situation that one would suppose might have been suitable for a *maison de plaisance* for

Vulcan, or some of his family, but which no mere mortals could have had the temerity to select for a residence,—yet there a body of Christians dwell, apparently under the protection, and at the tender mercy of, the awful Vesuvius. The rays of the setting sun imparted a dazzling brilliancy to the windows of both church and convent, in which my fancy saw a type of the ardent Christian's faith, that can make life endurable under the most trying circumstances of danger and privation.

As we proceeded, we beheld at intervals full-sized figures, that we had not previously observed, in an elevated position, on different buildings, all facing Vesuvius, and bending forward, each having one hand raised, like the monumental popes. These are all statues of St. Jenuario, the patron saint of Naples and its neighbourhood; and it is said that since these deprecating hands have been uplifted, no serious injury has been inflicted by Vesuvius. The people, I suppose, attribute to the saint's kindly interference that the eruption which took place

three years ago destroyed *only* two hundred persons and about fifty or sixty habitations.

After passing again through Portici, we drove part of the way home by the shore. As we approached Naples, the sea was

> "Fill'd with the face of heaven, which from afar
> Came down upon the waters; all its hues,
> From the rich sunset to the rising star,
> Their magical variety diffuse."

Who that has looked upon a glowing sunset reflected in the bay of Naples can ever forget what are the glories of the parting day set forth in that mirror?

LETTER XVIII.

Naples.

THIS day (April 1st) we were to have gone to Baiæ, but during the night a high wind arose, that shook our windows, and announced a sirocco—a violent gale proceeding from the coast of Africa. Yesterday the sea was brightly blue, its slightly-curling waves, catching the sunbeams, looked all sparkling, as if the stars had been transferred from above, and held their mystic dance on the surface of the waters; but such was the transformation to-day, that I was reminded of Prior's poem of "The Lady's Looking-glass."

> "Celia and I, the other day,
> Walked o'er the sand-hills to the sea.

The setting sun adorned the coast,
His beams entire, his fierceness lost.
And on the surface of the deep
The winds lay only not asleep.

* * * * * *

But O the change! the winds grow high;
Impending tempests charge the sky;
The lightning flies, the thunder roars,
And big waves lash the frightened shores."

Thunder and lightning we have not had as yet, but the sea now looks as if it consisted of molten lead, varied in colour in one part by a lurid green, its tumultuous waves seeming fraught with destructive power. The sky has been equally metamorphosed; the light fleecy clouds of the last evening are replaced by a dense lowering mass, that looks as if the world was about to be drenched with ink. The islands, that by their differing in extent, form, and colouring, usually add so much to the beauty of the bay of Naples, are wholly obscured. The soft smiling scene we have hitherto dwelt on with such admiration is changed to one awfully sombre, that brings to

our recollection Martin's bold attempt to imagine and depict Nature's dark and appalling aspect on "the eve of the deluge."

* * * * * *

For several days our excursion to Baiæ was necessarily deferred from the uncertainty of the weather, or rather I may say from its continuing wet and stormy; more unfortunate days could not have been murmured at in our own too much abused climate than we have recently experienced over the fire during the first ten days of April. We could have patiently endured such at home, as a matter of course; but here we considered ourselves very ill-used, and deprived of our just right to bright skies and balmy zephyrs.

At length, tired of our sedentary manner of life, we set out, somewhat doubtingly as to the day continuing fine; it did so, however, and we had a very pleasant excursion. We first went to the ancient and once magnificent city of Pozzuoli, now a small poor town; and immediately after leaving it saw on our right a cliff where there are some little remains of a villa of

Cicero's, which is said to have been very magnificent. It was built to resemble the Academy at Athens, and afforded him the pleasure of angling from his own windows, where we may suppose he sometimes caught his dinner when he had not other fish to fry, or wrote the books entitled "Questiones Academicæ," (composed there,) perhaps on days too sunny for his baits to allure the finny tribe. However that may have been, there are undoubted traces of the walls having been washed by the sea, between which and their scanty remains is now a broad piece of land, including a good road.

You will, of course, take it for granted, that the sea has receded, not being aware of the different relative proceedings adopted by land and water in this country, from those pursued by them elsewhere. Instead of the sea transgressing its due bounds, it has been nearly stationary, while the land has risen higher than its former level. But this movement of the earth was a trifle in comparison to other more agile and ambitious performances in the neighbour-

hood, for, at a short distance, is Monte Nuovo, near which our road lay; it is three miles in circumference at the base, and four hundred and forty feet above the level of the sea. It was thrown up from the Lucrine lake, in the course of one night, in the year 1538, after an awful earthquake, which swallowed up the whole of a large village, called Tripergole, situated between the sea and the lake. The ground opened, ejecting flames and smoke, intermixed with sand and burning stones, of both which latter, Monte Nuovo is composed. The sea, it is said, burst forwards, during the great convulsion, but returned within its former bounds, excepting in part, where it remained covering the ground on which the village of Tripergole stood. At a short distance is another more ancient volcanic mountain, called the mount Barbara, but I believe it is not known when that arose.

The psalmist's query would not here be at all strange, of "why hop ye so, ye high hills?" for truly in this region of steep hills and deep vales, scarce anything has been quite stationary;

the sea may lay claim to more fixedness of character than most other objects. The Lucrine lake had nearly all its waters dried up, by the rising of the Monte Nuovo; a small portion only remains, by which we passed, as we turned off the road, to walk to the lake Avernus, about a mile distant. Our path was embellished by budding myrtles, and wild flowers; amongst the latter was very conspicuous, the crimson Cycleman. Close to the lake are the ruined walls of a considerable sized building, called by our guide the temple of Pluto, whose peculiar domain lay in this quarter, though by no means confined to it.

The lake Avernus is considered to be the crater of an extinct volcano; its name is derived from a Greek word, signifying without birds. The sulphureous exhalations which proceed thence were kept within narrow bounds, by thick forests, growing on the surrounding hills; and those exhalations being fatal to the feathered tribe "no skylark warbled o'er" the dark waters which, from the same cause, were destitute

of fish. What food the Cimmerians had, who lived (as the story goes) in deep sunk caves, on the borders of the lake, it is hard to imagine, unless they were fire-eaters, in which case they certainly lacked no supply of provisions, if they betook themselves to sporting in the Phlegrœan fields. Augustus cut down those forests on which tradition has breathed so brown a horror, and now the hills are covered with brushwood, the sulphureous exhalations exist no more, and the Cimmerians have decamped.

We went, lighted by torches, into a deep cavern in the side of one of the hills; it was a favourite place of resort of the Cumean sybil, who visited her friends occasionally, or took a bath. She had an exit from, as well as an entrance to it, probably afterwards used by some less classic personages, as it is of ample dimensions to suit the purposes of a band of robbers. A small side aperture showed, as the torch was held near it, a narrow passage, which the ancients considered led, by a rapid descent, to the infernal regions.

One person at a time could just rub through

the sides of the rock, and having done so for some length of way, we reached a fearful looking and sounding piece of black water, which some of our party crossed, not in Charon's boat, but on men's backs. I begged to decline that trajet, and hastily as I could pushed my way back to the larger cave, where I breathed (by comparison) more freely; but was happy to escape altogether to the outer air from the torches' glare and smoke, amidst which a vociferous set of ragged athletæ appeared, downright ferocious in their invitations to accept of their unwished for services. They looked most picturesquely fitted denizens of the cave on the threshold of which we first saw them; their patois language and fierce gesticulations as they quarrelled amongst themselves, suiting the action to the word, and tearing their passion to rags, was quite in accordance (I will not say harmony) with the scene.

Whilst retracing our steps we observed on an extreme high point of Monte Barbara (part of the crater of an extinct volcano) what we could

scarcely believe is a building, but there actually is one, on that pinnacle; a hermitage where three Franciscan monks dwell, truly lifted above the world and its cares, if, indeed, the difficulty of procuring necessary food, which is supplied to them by the poor inhabitants beneath, does not sometimes cause them anxiety, especially if, like Sancho Panza, they are desirous of having their wallets well filled. The place of residence they have chosen is nearly as extraordinary as that within the bowels of the earth, (which we were assured formerly was not untenanted,) from whence we had just emerged.

After reaching the carriage, we proceeded to Baiæ, so called, 'tis said, from Bajus, the companion of Ulysses, being buried there. *En route* we alighted to look at the baths of Nero. They consist of six long narrow corridors. As we advanced in one of them, the hot steam that issued from the farther part drove us back, and instead of being parboiled ourselves, we were satisfied with seeing an egg go through the process of being wholly so, in two minutes, by

the natural heat of the vapour. Nero had a palace in the neighbourhood, and those baths or sudatories were supposed to contribute to the preservation of his valuable health and life. Again I was glad to escape to the carriage.

At about the distance of a mile, we stopped to see the remains of three temples. One was probably dedicated to Mercury, for in the centre of it was found the incomparably beautiful bronze statue of the messenger of the gods, now in the museum at Naples. The walls of the temple are of a cone-like form; they remain entire, and are of great dimensions, the space enclosed is one hundred and forty-six feet in diameter. Light is admitted by a circular opening at the top, as in the Pantheon. The faintest whisper spoken close to the wall is plainly heard at the opposite side, though not by a person standing in the centre, the wall being the conductor of sound.

In an adjoining field are the considerable ruins of a Temple of Diana. At a little distance, at the opposite side of the road, and close

to the shore, are the still high walls of what must have been a magnificent temple, dedicated to Venus, whose sway was particularly acknowledged in this vicinity which a poet calls

> "Land of Venus, golden coast!
> Nature's fairest gift and boast
> Happy Baiæ!"

The only substantial remains of buildings now existing on the shores of Baiæ, once so thickly inhabited, belonged to the ideal personages of Olympus, whilst the palaces of men of the Augustan, and a subsequent period, are seen no more excepting in their foundations beneath the water, or on the side of the hill, in which they are so embedded as to be scarcely distinguished from it. Forsyth says, "Baiæ was usurped by the great alone; they admitted no towns, no commonalty, nothing but palaces on their golden shore. Men who possessed half a province elsewhere, contended here for a single acre. They who wanted room on the bank built into the sea, and met there the fresh-

ness and salubrity of another element. In the course of a few minutes, you sail past the highest names of antiquity. You see Marius, Sylla, Pompey, Piso, Cæsar, Tiberius, Nero, all crowding in for the most beautiful angles, and elbowing each other's villas. Yet what are those villas now? Alas! nothing but masses of built tufa, which you can hardly distinguish from the tufa of the hill, naked walls, skeletons which were concealed from the ancients themselves, and covered with marbles too beautiful to remain."

Baiæ was the favourite winter retreat of the rich and luxurious Romans. They retired there from the turmoils of the great city, to enjoy the finest climate within their reach, enchanting scenery, and an excellent kind of fish that they found in perfection at that season, for so had the masters of the world degenerated, that the pleasures of the table had become amongst their prime objects. The cultivation of cabbages was quite abandoned by the patriots of the empire. Seneca, in speaking of the luxurious abodes of Baiæ, said they were so enervating,

that all who wished to have a command over their passions should flee from them. Naught of these seductive haunts of pleasure now remains but some cemented stones, that mark, as Forsyth says, where one palace elbowed another.

> "And wrapt in weeds the shore of Venus lies,
> There Baiæ sees no more the joyous throng;
> Her bank all-beaming with the pride of Rome:
> No generous vines now bask along the hills,
> Where sport the breezes of the Tyrrhene main;
> With baths and temples mixed, no villas rise;
> Nor art sustain'd amid reluctant waves
> Draw the cool murmurs of the breathing deep."

Not even a fisherman's hut is to be seen on or near the envied site of former palaces. At the back of the commanding height that rises from the shore is a small village called Baulis, consisting of one poor street of peasants' humble habitations that seem to attest,

> "Man wants but little here below,"

although, doubtless, the lofty edifices formerly in their vicinity were calculated to convey a very different impression.

Assuredly man, of all animals, is the

most versatile in his capacities; he can shrink himself so as to be the tenant of an abode little better than the beaver constructs, or he can amplify his demands until acres are covered by the foundations of his dwelling. Between the worm that grovels on the ground, and the butterfly in its expanded state, launching through realms of air, there is not a greater difference in external circumstances than exists between the requirements of the man constrained by dire necessity to confine himself within the narrow bounds of a bare subsistence, and his fellow-creature made after the same pattern and of like properties, who can ransack the different quarters of the globe for his luxuries,

> "And entertains a score or two of tailors
> To study fashions to adorn his body."

On the summit of the hill which we ascended some old walls had remained. Murat added to and included them in a castle which he caused to be erected; and though, in fact, not much more than extensive barracks, the situation is so singularly fine, that at every point of view in

which it is seen, it excites admiration as a most striking and picturesque object. We continued our way through vineyards until we arrived at a farmhouse which overlooks the two bays of Baiæ and Misenus. We seated ourselves in a rustic porch; our servant unpacked a basket of provisions, and we had our goblets filled with some of the farmer's excellent Falernian wine. The pleasure afforded by our rustic meal was much enhanced by the contemplation of the glorious scenery that lay outstretched before us; not far distant were the islands of Ischia and Procida, like gems set in the expansive blue sea. Beneath was

> "Baiæ's viny coast, where peaceful seas
> Fann'd by kind zephyrs, ever kiss the shore."

And on all sides were objects that filled the mind to overflowing with interest and admiration. So situated we might have counted hours as minutes, had not our guide invited us to proceed down a rugged path, to a boat in which, being seated, we were rowed across the bay. Some of the *débris* of the epicurean villas we had been talking of were frequently to be seen beneath

and above the water; it appears that in many instances they were built not only quite at the water's edge, but also on submarine bases, like the houses at Venice. As our boat advanced, we had cautiously to steer amidst protruding angles, and masses of fallen walls that had been doubtless full of symmetry. One of our party, whose voice is often in requisition for our entertainment, especially on boating excursions, (when music is, I think, most sweet,) sang, as being quite appropriate, that beautiful melody composed on a far distant shore.

"As the fisherman strays,
When the clear, cold eve's declining,
He sees the round towers of other days
In the wave beneath him shining!

Thus shall memory often, in dreams sublime,
Catch a glimpse of the days that are over;
Thus sighing, look through the waves of time,
For the long faded glories they cover."

Our guide called our attention to the extensive ruins of Julius Cæsar's Palace; of that of Piso, where the conspiracy against Nero was

formed; and also of Domitia, the tyrant's aunt, whom he had poisoned that he might get her wealth. The names of others known to fame were likewise enumerated by the practised cicerone, all whose habitations, or rather the remnants of them, are mingling with the sand and the sea-weed.

Whilst we were thinking of bye-gone men and things, our guide and boatmen fell into earnest discourse about some heroes of the present time, our own gallant seamen, whom they called "i diavoli del mare." On a late occasion, the king of Naples was disposed to treat a portion of our countrymen very ill, who, on the faith of treaties, had embarked large fortunes in the manufacture of sulphur in Sicily, which would have been lost to them, and the acquisition of sulphur rendered difficult to us, if the monopoly of that article by a French company, (who were to pay the king a large sum of money,) had been persisted in. No satisfactory reply could be obtained by our government, to repeated remonstrances on the subject; so, one fine morning,

two frigates, some sloops of war, and a steam-boat, appeared in the Bay of Baiæ, with that flag unfurled which is never seen "in the battle or the breeze" without exciting awe, or obtaining homage and respect. An answer from the government of Naples on the sulphur question was peremptorily demanded within a short given space of time, and a very satisfactory reply was promptly conceded to our significant messengers. Our vessels withdrew, and their commander, without having had occasion to fire a shot, might have written his consequent dispatch in the three celebrated words, "veni, vidi, vici." And thus, whenever they leave their sea-girt home, "that precious stone set in the silver sea," to fight for her honour on the ocean, our great field of battle, may "i diavoli del mare" continue, after every achievement, to leave behind them the prestige of their superhuman skill, force and courage, and the track of their glory on the pathless waters, making the name of Englishmen to be for ever honoured as it is now, in all quarters of the globe!

LETTER XIX.

Naples.

We had yesterday a most prosperous and delightful expedition; the carriage put us down at the foot of Monte Nuovo, (which is only a short distance from Pozzuoli). We set about walking to the top; at first the ground was barren and loose, giving way under our feet at every instant, as if it were composed of cinders; but, after proceeding a short way, we found flowering shrubs of a low growth springing up in all directions, and nature assuming "her youthful form robust." We observed myrtles, white flowering heath, yellow broom, and a shrub resembling our gorse; the flowers yellow also, and growing in thick clusters, the perfume charming, more like jessamine, and not so heavy as that of the

gorse, which is best when "winnowed o'er the land" and borne on the breeze. A pretty dwarf cistus was profusely flinging around white flowers, which I took, until closely examined, for wild roses.

I found the ascent steep, but not very difficult; we stopped some time on the edge of the crater, which the guide said is more than two hundred feet in depth; the sides are verdant, the bottom is a round level space of rather an undetermined colour, inclining to green; down there goats sometimes wander, and persons who follow them have perceived a hot fluid very near the surface; we saw steam issuing from an aperture just where we were standing, much too warm to allow of our putting our hands near it more than momentarily. We had, from the summit, a very fine view of the bay of Pozzuoli and the adjacent coast on one side, and on the other, of the Lucrine lake, and the lake Avernus with its ruined temple.

I could willingly have remained much longer but that our plans for the day made it necessary

we should effect our retreat, and we did so in an opposite direction from that by which we had ascended. We came rapidly down, and before quite reaching the bottom, we arrived at a vineyard, full of vine-dressers, men and women, boys and girls, who were singing gaily, whilst pursuing their work. As well as vines there were many fig-trees; these latter abound in the environs of Naples; they are just now very striking; their deep festooning upturning branches of a silver grey colour, are all bursting at the points into bunches of large light leaves, in the midst of which is disclosed the solid, round, dark fruit that has been nurtured within them; in its present state, the fig-tree is quite an object of our admiration.

Whilst thus writing to you of some of the beauties of the opening spring, the following passage in one of Dr. Channing's works occurs to me, which you will like to read if unacquainted with it; "How much of God may be seen in the structure of a single leaf, which, though so frail as to tremble in every wind, yet holds con-

nections and living communications with the earth, the air, the clouds, and the distant sun; and, through these sympathies with the universe, is itself a revelation of an omnipotent mind. God delights to diffuse himself everywhere. Through his energy, unconscious matter clothes itself with proportions, powers, and beauties, which reflect his wisdom and love. How much more must he delight to frame conscious and happy recipients of his perfections, in whom his wisdom and love may substantially dwell, with whom he may form spiritual ties, and to whom he may be an everlasting source of moral energy and happiness!"

The present season of spring, "bella madre de' fiori," is that which more particularly, I think, above the rest, brings the Creator frequently to our minds; when nature, after long dryness and inertness, is re-awakened at the appointed time from deep repose, and life and beauty silently emerge, pervading all things. Eternal youth rises up before us, dressing the world in varied charms, and giving to all sen-

tient things, means and capabilities for enjoyment. His Spirit breathes around, and the gentle passing breeze seems to whisper in our ears, "God is love."

Having loitered rather too long amongst the vine-dressers, we hastened to Cumæ, and through the Arco Felice, a gateway one hundred and sixty feet in height, we entered, not a proud city, that claimed to be the first founded in Italy, and was once suitably announced by the lofty pile, but saw before us only green fields and vineyards, their boundaries frequently marked by some small remains of ancient strongly cemented walls; "Grass now grows where Troy's walls stood," is the report of travellers, and the same may be said literally of Cumæ, which latter, tradition relates, was built by the Cumæans of the Isle of Eubœa, in Greece, who, along with the Calcedonians, came into Italy to find a new place of abode soon after the destruction of Troy. The situation they fixed on, and the country around were so charming, that it was called at a later period

by the Romans "fortunata" and "felix." Their last king, Tarquin the Proud, made Cumæ his retreat, and died there. It became a city of great importance and strength.

We ascended the height near the Arco Felice, whence we saw at a short distance the site of the ancient Liternum, where Scipio Africanus retired in disgust; his countrymen, for whom he fought and conquered, not satisfied with the laurels he had already obtained, as well as the certainty of future wealth, demanded money at his hands, which had been distributed to his soldiers; he turned his back on ungrateful Rome, and passed the remainder of his days at Liternum. In an old account given of his house and baths, they are described as having been surrounded by high walls to defend his dwelling against the incursions of wild boars and banditti, and within these walls he died; a tomb was there raised to his memory by his friends, inscribed,

"Ingrata patria, nec ossa quidem mea habes."

When Cumæ became a Roman colony under

Augustus, it is supposed that tomb, so disgraceful to the Roman name, was destroyed, and the sarcophagus that contained the hero's ashes transported to Rome, (like Bonaparte's to Paris,) and placed in the family sepulchre, near the gate of St. Sebastian, at Rome; but it was not allowed to rest there, being removed thence, some years ago, to the Vatican, which it now adorns. In after times a tower was erected on the spot where Scipio's house stood, and, it is supposed, was raised with the same materials as had been employed for the monument; amongst the stones, one was found on which the word "Patria" was inscribed; this is included in the present building, and hence probably that part of the country immediately in its vicinity, which gave the illustrious self-exile a home, is in common parlance called "Patria."

We next turned our thoughts and steps towards what had been the Sibyl's cave, which lies at some distance from the Arco Felice. The common account of this lady is that she too came from Eubœa, and probably accompanied

her compatriots when they transferred themselves to Italy, that she might perform the office of repeating the oracles as she had previously done at Delphos; hence she is called the Sibylla Delphica, and her successor, who was born on the spot, and prophesied there about five hundred years later, is designated the Cumæan Sibyl; (she also called herself Amalthea.) It was she who offered for sale to Tarquin, king of Rome, the books of the oracles; he at first declined the acquisition, upon which she burned several; but, like a spirited woman, demanded still more for the few that remained; to which imposition he, like a paltry customer, was obliged to submit when he wished for them, and found they could be had on no better terms. There was no putting in the funds, nor purchasing of railroad shares in those days; so what investment she made of her money, history does not inform us.

We walked through bean and corn-fields, intermixed with budding vines to her (the sibyl's) cave, where we did *not* see "a hundred pas-

sages, a hundred doors;" it is a large open space in a rock not now more than a hundred feet in depth; the more distant part is filled up with stones, rubbish, &c. Like modern ladies, it seems she was fond of travelling, and often left home. We certainly did not expect to find either

> "The mad prophetic sibyl on her rock reclined,"

Or,

> . . . "Names inscribed on leaves,
> In order laid before the cavern's entrance.

Instead of these, we found what was much more substantial, viz. several large barrels of wine deposited for the king's use. The cave, tradition says, was most beautifully decorated, and lined with marble, at the time when Æneas, skilled how to approach "the frantic maid," paid her his homage. Above it was situated a strong castle, which some of the Gothic kings fortified as a depository for their treasures. The Emperor Justinian's general could only find access to this castle by his engineers working through the roof of the sibyl's cave, and thus he brought

down walls and rubbish that filled it up, leaving only the comparatively small part that remains open, which at present serves the purpose of a cellar for his majesty. Whether the wine imbibes any inspiration from the place, as the cask derives odour from the wine, those best can tell whose cheering goblets are replenished from thence.

At a little distance from the dismantled castle are the ruins of the Temple of Apollo, in which was placed his celebrated statue brought from Attica, and which is said by ancient writers to have shed tears on several melancholy occasions! Certainly, if given at all to the melting mood, he had abundant cause to exercise a lachrymose tendency in this spot where his priestess's abode was dishonoured, and his own shrine violated and abandoned. Finding matters irremediable, I suppose he stepped into his chariot of the sun to dissipate his chagrin at the turn affairs had taken.

We retraced our steps; sometimes observing the broad flat stones of the Appian way appear-

ing amongst briars and brambles, and the earth banked up in many places by portions of the walls of the houses, or ramparts of Cumæ.

We drove round by the lake now called Fusaro, once named Acheron, the Tartarus, so much dreaded by the wicked, at least by such as had poetical belief. This lake is supposed to be the crater of an extinct volcano. It seems the Greeks were unacquainted with volcanic explosions and effects, except on the shores of the Mediterranean, and wanting such materials at home to aid the imagination, they were fain to export the souls of their friends wholesale for trial, reward, or punishment, to encounter, according to their deserts, "blasts from hell" or "airs from Heaven;" but instead of Charon and his boat, we saw a fisherman getting oysters; women were also employed in gathering shells; we ought, I suppose, to have mistaken them for some of the aforesaid unhappy wanderers; but we were too hungry to indulge in visionary matters, (notwithstanding the example of the renowned Knight de la Mancha, whose physical

cravings rarely interfered with those of the imagination.)

We sat down upon the grass, and made our repast at a short distance from the lake, which is only separated from the sea by a narrow strip of land. A small piece of water was nearer to us than the lake; it flows into the sea, and, our guide assured us, was the veritable Styx; this is, however, doubted by the best judges, who think that Virgil knew more about the matter than we moderns, and placed it between Avernus and Elysium.

The wanderers on this classic ground find a great advantage in its not being broken up into places for present occupation, manufactories, or dwellings; the changes that have taken place are geographical ones, and, owing to Nature's own movements, which, it must be allowed, are sufficiently frequent; but no new, uncongenial objects, the work of men, intrude themselves; the very loneliness and desertion impart a suitable solemnity, and we see many things around us but little different from what generations long passed away once beheld them.

Having ate, rested, and talked as much as we liked, we thought it time to leave Tartarus and proceed to the Elysian fields,—which we entered without bearing any golden branch to obtain us admittance. Mulberry-trees and vines were the sole occupants of the ground that we found there, excepting some few poor labourers and their poor houses. At the sides of the upper road, which passes through the fields, there are great numbers of ancient sepulchres; some of them are actually converted into dwellings by the "miserabili," as our guide called those poor creatures who find their home in the tombs. We pursued our way for a distance of two or three miles along the banks of another lake called Mare Morto, on one side of which we saw a succession of tombs. They are not inhabited either by the "miserabili" or the more happy dead; the niches are all distinctly separate rows, where were formerly placed the urns of the latter around the semicircular, hollowed, cavities, which constitute the mausoleum, and still, in many instances, preserve portions of the

stucco and traces of ornaments that decorated them. It is remarkable, that in Christendom there ever has been less of outward observances and respect paid to the deceased than was practised amongst the civilized heathen. It may be that we expend comparatively less care on the poor remains of humanity, because of the assurance we have in Scripture, that our bodies, rendered vile by death, will become glorious bodies—that the mortal will put on immortality.

LETTER XX.

Naples.

Our next excursion was by boat, from Pozzuoli to the Cape of Misenum, which we are told was called after a Trojan follower of Æneas, who was buried there. On our way, we passed by the shore of Baiæ and the Elysian fields, which places lie not far apart.

Our boat then directed its course to a little distance, and brought us under a perfectly perpendicular rocky cliff of immense height, on the top of which we were told may still be seen, by those who will take the trouble of visiting them, the extensive ruins of a palace and two theatres; and also that the palace had belonged to Lucullus, and was erected on account of the enlarged

view it commanded, extending to the Sicilian and Tuscan seas. The name of Lucullus occurring so frequently wherever there are traces of a fine villa, castle, or palace, reminds one of the Marquis of Carrabas, whom Puss in Boots ordered should nominally be the owner of every possession that a powerful monarch noticed in his morning's ride; certain it is, we often in the course of our present drives hear of his having been an almost equally great proprietor.

Our guide went on to say that Tiberius afterwards possessed the palace, and there died. His predilection for a sea-girt abode was the same living or dying. Having that execrable being so constantly on the borders of his kingdom, Neptune was certainly no friend of our race, or he would have allowed one or two of the serpents that put the priest of Apollo and his sons to a dreadful death to have given an equally effective embrace to the person of one who was a curse to so important a portion of his species. To that palace, as well as to his philanthropy, succeeded (though not imme-

diately) an almost equally admirable owner in Nero, whose preparations for bathing and other purposes are pointed out in a great grotto made for a reservoir, called Dragonaria. There are a vast number of the most picturesque deep-sunk grottos all along the coast, so that persons are puzzled to distinguish the natural from the artificial; even the latter have been subjected to such variations in the course of years, as to render them pretty much on a par with the others. Our boat passed through one near Baiæ, that was just like a good-sized arch of a bridge.

We did not land at Misenum. It forms a beautiful and striking object in the landscape when seen at a distance, but when approached, it is sombre, treeless, and altogether very uninviting. We passed close under the steep cliff on which the palace was situated; no traces either of vegetable or animal life were visible; it looked as if Cain might have chosen it as a suitable place of refuge, when he bore the mark that raised every man's hand against him. Not

a single object was to be seen on the cliff, excepting one dark, solid, gothic tower, placed on the summit, not at all in ruins, but as if ready for the accommodation, at the present time, of some robber chief, who exacted tribute from every passing sail; like the inhabitants of the strong passes on the banks of the Rhine in the olden time.

We could see in the distance, Vesuvius throwing up its smoke as it did (but at present only in a light and graceful manner) when Pliny the elder fell a victim to its excesses in that line; he commanded the Roman fleet in the port of Misenum, at the period of the ever-memorable eruption that occurred in the reign of the Emperor Titus, and which buried Herculaneum and Pompeii. The younger Pliny described his uncle as a natural philosopher desirous of making observations on the awful occurrence, being also induced to go to the immediate neighbourhood of Vesuvius, for the purpose of assisting some friends who had communicated to him

the alarm and dismay with which they were filled by the premonitory symptoms that had occurred. Thus doubly moved by the love of knowledge, and of friends, he went, hoping to make interesting observations on what was passing, and to remove his friends from their perilous situation, but perished himself along with them. Eustace, in his classical tour, on every possible occasion, exhibits a generous, elevated, as well as a refined mind; and in writing on this subject, he condemns the younger Pliny for remaining at Misenum, and not accompanying his uncle either to share his danger, or to assist in extricating him. Yet, perhaps, it was the presence and entreaties of a fond mother which detained the youth by her side, and so helped to obtain for him the blessing promised in the fifth commandment, or he too would probably have perished with the other sufferers.

After leaving Misenum, the next point we touched at was the Island of Procida, where we landed at a long quay. There, and in other directions, fishermen's houses are the only visible

habitations. The island is mostly composed of ashes and lava. Some geologists say that it originally formed a portion of the island of Ischia, while others maintain that it must have been attached to Misenum; but I believe all agree in opinion as to its being an offset from one or the other, and that some earthquake added to the incomparable beauty of the surrounding scenery, by placing it where it now proudly stands. Being composed of ashes and lava, it was of course very barren; but the fertilizing influences of nature which begin to clothe the coral-reef as soon as it emerges from the ocean, were aided by the industry of the inhabitants, originally a Greek colony. The soil has become particularly productive in corn and wine, and also in different kinds of fruits, which latter ripen there earlier than in the neighbouring places, and the sale of these is found very lucrative at Naples. The island contains nine or ten villages, and at no distant period was considered more populous in proportion to its size than any other spot in Europe; to our cursory

observation it seemed a little kingdom of sailors and fishermen; but they are perhaps amphibious animals, and at another season of the year may be transformed into agriculturists.

In the circumference of the island (about seven miles) there are several sandy creeks, some of which serve as docks for the building of small vessels. The women of Procida wore the Greek dress commonly until of late years; at present it is laid aside, and only used on Sundays and other festas. Expecting to see very good costumes, we were disappointed on perceiving everybody in ordinary habiliments. As some of us had brought sketching materials, we thought it worth while to make inquiries on the subject, in consequence of which a handsome young girl put on her festa Greek dress, and sat for her picture.

Whilst the sketchers were employed with their pencils, the rest of our party walked up a very steep ascent through a village called "la Madonna delle grazie." Wherever an open space between the houses on either side oc-

curred, the view was beautiful; at one part, we overlooked a deeply indented little bay, where a small quantity of coral is found, and from thence we were told the explorers after coral proceed to more distant shores to find in greater abundance that article, which is at present in great demand amongst the visitors at Naples. Many who never cared for coral since their infant hands grasped and cast it aside, are suddenly overtaken with a mania for it—a certain kind of scarlet fever; and all who come to Naples, old and young, turn coral-hunters in the numerous shops, which are amply provided to allay the craving desire that seems to prevail like an epidemic amongst the ladies. In Procida, coral is only to be had in its raw state; there are no jewellers to give it the irresistible forms it assumes at Naples.

The ladies of our party are not very fanciful purchasers, but it is a fact that soon after our arrival at Naples we unexpectedly found that the acquisition of pins, ear-rings, bracelets, &c., (which we never previously dreamed we

wanted) had become matters of the last necessity.

On reaching the top of the hill, we were delighted in looking over a battlemented wall at the grand and extensive view before us. In the distance, we could perceive the promontories of Gaeta, and of others in its vicinity, and of the hills of Formiæ. The deep blue of the sea beneath and around contrasted finely with the varied colouring of the nearer and more remote mountains and islands. Vesuvius was directly in front, throwing up its white vapour, soft and fleecy looking as the clouds above, with which it mingled.

Pozzuoli, recalling the idea rather of its ancient magnificence than of its present altered condition, was seen to great advantage at the edge of the sea, on a rising ground, its houses, domes, and campanili backed by the sombre mountains of Avernus and Barbaro, and in the rear, at some distance, were seen the snow-covered Apennines, which in one direction bounded the horizon. The beautiful and pe-

culiar shaped island of Capreæ, and the high pointed crest of the island of Ischia, came under our observation. Neither pen nor pencil could portray, or convey even a faint idea, of the beauty of that scene.

The battlemented wall, from whence "our eyes caught new pleasures," formed an appendage to a former palace, now converted into a prison, where many a poor wretch is doomed to linger out his days. Hundreds of carbonari who attempted some revolution about twenty years ago, are still confined there, the sad survivors of companions from whom Death has struck off their chains, thereby emancipating many an aching heart and limb.

I do not know why it is that the sight of prisoners in Italy affects me more than anywhere else. Perhaps it is that the beauty of the country and the charm of the climate, which seem created for purposes of happiness, are in painful contrast with the condition of persons debarred from their enjoyment, prevented from partaking of the munificent bounties prepared for them by Providence, added to the suspicion

that many a noble ill-directed impulse, by untoward circumstances, works evil where, under happier auspices, it might be productive only of good to the patriot and his country.

Whilst we stood at the battlemented wall, lost in admiration of the scenery we were gazing on, our attention was suddenly called thence by hearing the clanking of chains, and, turning round, we saw a fine gallant-looking young man of high undaunted bearing, notwithstanding his sad predicament, conducted for the first time to the adjacent prison by two soldiers. The inmates of that sad abode are sent to Naples, when disease lays merciful hold on them, to prepare for that common grave where all equally lay down their burdens, whether of pomp and greatness, or of poverty and sorrow.

Everybody says the present king is a truly amiable, pious, benevolent man, and were his advisers equally good, Naples might rejoice in his rule. Those who have immediate access to royal personages incur great responsibilities, as the necessary circumvallation of etiquette which

confines sovereigns to the society of a comparatively small circle, renders them liable to receive from that limited number many of their impressions. Wisdom, which comes to others from the various casualties of life, (as the winds of Heaven, blowing from every point, carry fertilizing particles,) is conveyed to princes, hedged round as they are, through narrower channels, with the exception of the press, that "chartered libertine," which, like the atmosphere they breathe, walls cannot exclude; and most happy amongst sovereigns are those who reign in countries where a free press and well-considered and understood laws guard their subjects' rights, thus relieving them from that "curse of kings," the apprehension of self-interested persons making in their royal ears "the worse appear the better reason."

In former times, Procida was governed by a succession of feudal lords. On the death of Frederick II., who had reigned fifty-three years in Sicily, the pope, as I have already mentioned, in defiance of the just rights of his heirs, made

over the Sicilies to Charles of Anjou, who established himself at Naples, where he ruled with a rod of iron. His presence, however, contributed to suppress outbreaks of discontent; but in Sicily, where no such restraint was felt, the haughty overbearing conduct of the French became insupportable, and a deep conspiracy was formed, headed by John, the lord of Procida, to destroy those hated rulers and tyrants. A train was laid which required but the application of a spark to produce an explosion. This was furnished by an insult offered by the French to a lady of Palermo in the streets of that town. Being completely off their guard, the French were massacred on Easter Sunday, 1282, during the singing of the vespers at Palermo.* John of Procida was the principal author and contriver of the scheme, which, horrible as it was, originated in his deep sympathy

* The French were long made to remember the defeat they sustained on this occasion, and which was felt so severely at first by Charles of Anjou, that on hearing of it he exclaimed, in an agony of grief, "O God, if thou hast decreed to humble me, grant me at least a gentle and gradual descent from the pinnacle of greatness!" At a later period, Henry the Fourth said, "If I am provoked, I will breakfast at Milan, and dine at Naples." "Your Majesty," (replied the Spanish Ambassador,) "may perhaps arrive in Sicily for Vespers."

for his suffering countrymen, and they cast off the cruel yoke that had been laid on them. The Sicilians chose for their king Peter of Arragon, who had married the grand-daughter of their former beloved sovereign, Frederick II. The two Sicilies remained separated until, after long and harassing wars, they were united, in 1504, under Ferdinand the Catholic.

Charles of Anjou, king of Naples, left no means untried to get into his power the lord of Procida, who had mainly contributed to rescue from his usurping grasp the magnificent island, of Sicily. But he was revered by his countrymen, and, though an outlaw and an exile, was never betrayed by them. On the accession of the good king Robert, (the friend of Petrarch,) he was allowed to return and resume possession of his confiscated property. But being then advanced in life, and possibly not of Sancho Panza's opinion, that it is the easiest and most delightful thing possible to govern an island, he sold Procida, with all his feudal rights, to a family of the name of Cossa. Afterwards, feudal lordships being abolished, that island passed into the possession of the crown.

* * * * *

Our plans for the day included a visit to Ischia

which, however, we were not able to effect. Ischia is only two miles distant from Procida, and is much larger, being eighteen miles in circumference. The history is no doubt authentic that informs us that Jupiter, desiring to put an end to the war the giant Typhæus had presumed to wage against his authority, hurled down from Olympus the island of Ischia, which crushed, but did not utterly destroy, the rebel, whose impatience under his load is said to have since caused, at various times, upheavings, which men call earthquakes. Whether the victim, finding his lot irremediable, is more disposed than formerly to submit to his burden and to lawful authority, I cannot say, but certain it is, there has been such a long interval since his last writhings, that Ischia has become quite a flourishing place, and a favourite resort, in summer, of the Neapolitans.

It is to be hoped that the monster on whose state of repose the security of the inhabitants is said to depend will not hear of the treadmill,

and become dissatisfied with his present mode of punishment, which he may think should be of an improving and not of a vindictive character. But, perhaps, like others that Addison describes in his account of the mountain of misery, he may, on examination of modern improvements, prefer his own burden to that of his neighbour; and the sub-marine Atlas will continue to manifest the same kind of patience he has latterly exhibited. *Apropos* of Jupiter, we wished that we had interest to get him to prolong one day into three on the present occasion, that we might have time to run over the island of Ischia, but seeing no probability of such an exertion being made in our favour, we unfurled our sails, and bade adieu to Procida, the sky, that in the earlier part of the day was so serene and cloudless, became dark and lowering; a gale of wind sprang up, and the waves rose in tumultuous billows. We met several fishing-boats. The weather-beaten sailors who were guiding them and hauling in their nets (the sea

being too rough for fishing) did not seem to partake of our consternation, judging by the hearty cheers they gave us. We ladies repressed the expression of our fears, which were in a degree dissipated by the cries of the jolly tars, which amused and enlivened us, particularly when we heard the first English words, spoken by our crew in a parrot-like manner, "Pull away, Jack—pull away, boy." These were several times repeated, and comprised, as we learned, the whole of their knowledge of our language.

Our captain, a very fine, bright-countenanced young man, gave us an account of some English sailors of his acquaintance; he said they were very fine fellows, but strange in their ways of living, not caring for macaroni, but insisting on meat, and drinking rum and water. "And when they take our wine, they do so," said he, throwing himself from side to side, meaning that they got intoxicated; and then he imitated their fierce looks, and put himself in a boxing attitude.

"And you run away from them," I replied. He shook his head, and laughed heartily.

We were to have gone to look at some pillars belonging to an ancient temple that are under water, at a short distance from Pozzuoli. But I was too happy to escape, myself being in the same predicament, to care for the disappointment of not seeing them, as we were told the roughness of the sea rendered it impossible to obtain the desired view.

On approaching Pozzuoli, our crew began singing, in parts, "Il pescatore." I find it is invariably their custom to sing on approaching home; to communicate, I suppose, to anxious wives and children the pleasure they feel in drawing near to them. Suddenly, however, they ceased their joyous carol, took off their caps reverently, and stopped rowing, whilst the crews of some other boats we perceived had dropped upon their knees. All was silence, excepting the murmur of the waves and the sound of the vesper bell, which latter had called forth their unspoken but finely-expressed devotion.

As we got into our carriage to return to Naples, that sweet evening Italian benison met our ears, addressed to us by many kind voices, of " Felice notte, Felice notte !"

LETTER XXI.

Naples.

Having spent so many days lately in the country, we devoted the greater part of yesterday to seeing some of the apartments in the Museo Borbonico that we had not previously visited. It is a large modern building filled with works of art, of great interest. In a suite of rooms, on either side of the entrance, as well as in others on a higher story, are deposited the mosaics, fresco paintings, statues, vases, lamps, candelabra, &c., discovered at Herculaneum, Pompeii, and elsewhere; besides all the vast treasures brought from Rome inherited by the royal family on the extinction of the house of Farnese.

The collection of marbles here is small in comparison with the congregated numbers at

the Vatican and the Capitol; nevertheless it is of very considerable extent, and contains *chefs d'œuvre* of Grecian art, amongst which stands the statue of Aristides, "so simply so severely great" as to impress the beholder with the belief that the epithet, Just, had been worthily bestowed and handed down through succeeding ages. But the bronze statues are the pre-eminently fine portion of the treasures of the Museum. These are altogether unrivalled, I believe, considering their numbers and excellence.

The rooms appropriated to paintings are less richly adorned; even the chambers labelled "*Capo d'opera*" do not bear any comparison in point of value with the other departments. In passing through them, we looked in vain for those splendid landscapes of the Abruzzi, and the rocky coast of Naples, which one is led to expect in the country that gave birth to Salvator Rosa, and of which we had seen some grand specimens in the Pitti Palace, at Florence.

In fact, the deputies who governed Naples during a long series of years, robbed the country

of all moveable works of art, and despatched them to Spain. Fortunately, the emporiums of Herculaneum and Pompeii remained sealed in the abyss of night, until after the present family came to the throne. Whilst our attention was occupied by some of their contents, we retracted the wishes expressed by us at Herculaneum and Pompeii, that the beautiful decorations of those extinct, and partially disinterred, cities had been left on the spots where they were discovered, and an appropriate museum built at each place, containing their respective exhumations. These are not for the most part found, like poor mortal remains, converted into dust or disfigured to revolting hideousness, by the spices and cerements which make so futile an attempt to preserve from decay our spiritless untenanted forms. Lear, weeping over Cordelia, says, "Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life, and thou no breath at all?" and influenced by somewhat of the same kind of feeling, one is too apt to speak, or think, on seeing the crumbling blackened vestiges of the bodies

found in Diomed's house, when compared with the graceful, dignified likenesses of the consul Balbus and his family, dug out of the lava that filled up the theatre at Herculaneum. These are now here; they are in white marble, and wear the same aspect they did two thousand years ago. The mother is noble and commanding, but (like most matrons who have grown up families) not beautiful. One daughter is represented lovely as the sculptor's hand could render her; and another, it occurred to us, must have been a striking resemblance, we were so reminded by it of the appearance of many common-place young ladies. The youthful Balbus, spirited and graceful, sits upon his powerful horse, exhibiting the command of mind over mere physical brute force.

These statues adorn the Museum as they once did the theatre—whilst the fond parents who thus handed themselves and their children down to posterity—where are *they?*

In front of the entrance, and at some distance from it, in the interior of the building is a stair-

case; on the landing-place of the first flight of steps is a grand and most finely executed colossal lion, found at Herculaneum. The nostrils are dilated, the tail lashing as if the animal were just at the instant in fierce anger: which, by-the-bye, one might very well fancy him to be, at the bad taste exhibited in the statue placed just above, of the king, Ferdinand the First, grandfather of his present majesty, who is dressed as Minerva. However great a lover of wisdom the royal patron of the Muses might have been, it was not, I think, judicious to robe him as that goddess. He might have been contented with appropriating some of her attributes, (as Hercules to denote his strength wore the lion's skin,) without adopting altogether her costume, petticoats included.

The Lion looks as though he had been the appointed guardian of Olympus, and was as indignant at the improper freedom taken with Jove's own daughter, as any shepherd's dog might be supposed to be, if an ass carried off one

of the guarded flock, and dressed himself in its skin—as a wolf has done on more than one occasion, if fables be true.

It was this Ferdinand (alias Minerva) whom, with his family, an English fleet protected in the island of Sicily, for many years that we kept them out of the clutches of Bonaparte. Shortly after their restoration to Naples, whilst his majesty's gratitude towards us was warm, he overheard a conversation in his *salon*, relating to the great rebellion in England. When the manner of Charles the First's death was spoken of, he showed much displeasure, and asserted there was no foundation whatever for such a calumny, that the English were too good and loyal a people to maltreat a sovereign, and he harshly admonished the surprised courtier never to repeat so malignant a falsehood.* Of the truth of this anecdote, I believe there is not the least doubt;

* The said king Ferdinand gave, as a reason for not having the Herculaneum MSS. unrolled, that if they were found to contain matter against the truth of Christianity, his confessor would not absolve him.

it was much discussed at the time the circumstance occurred, and is still remembered.

In some of the upper apartments are exhibited a curious and interesting collection of the smaller culinary utensils found in the buried cities, principally at Pompeii, of which a much larger portion has been opened than of Herculaneum, although the latter place has better repaid the expense of excavation, by the greater number of fine works of art that have been discovered. We observed, in goodly rows, silver plates, dishes, spoons, a waiter or tray of the same, and also drinking-cups finely carved, wreathed with vine and ivy leaves, and a tea-urn that is constructed as like as possible to that indispensable portion of our English tea equipage, having a place for the heater in the centre, and a contrivance to admit air, from which we might with advantage take a hint, as ofttimes, for want of such, "the bubbling and loud hissing urn throws up a steamy column" too vociferous.

By-the-bye, I have never seen a tea-urn at any of the inns or houses where I have been in

Italy, and it was like meeting an old acquaintance, thus recognising one that had adorned a tea-table in Pompeii.

After all, I am doubtful whether the good people of that city had tea wherewith to fill, as we do, cups that "cheer, but not inebriate." I suppose Alexander did not bring any specimens of the invaluable shrub amongst his laurels from India. Tea, however, might possibly have been got from China, for silk certainly was by means of the Persians. An act was passed at Rome, by the senate, A. D. 16, prohibiting men's disgracing themselves by the effeminate delicacy of wearing silk apparel,—at that early period the marvellous achievements of the silk-worm were unknown to the Italians, equally with the powers of the steam their hot-water urns sent forth.

But, if tea was unknown, the apparatus I have been describing might have been found useful in extracting the essence from other plants, of an equally pleasing flavour to some palates,—for instance, camomile,—on which I

have heard that the late Dr. Baillie always himself breakfasted, and I know frequently recommended to others, who, but for such high authority, would probably have preferred a *dejeuné à la fourchette.* However, it is in vain to speculate on the fresh or dried herbs that were in use at Pompeii.

However, though tea may have been unknown at Pompeii, fruits were not; for a dessert found there is laid out, consisting of walnuts and other nuts, prunes or plums, figs and currants, besides bread or cakes formed as neatly as any of the productions that, cased in tin, come o ut of our ovens.

I must not forget, whilst on this subject, to notice a full set of the paste-cutters, such as confectioners of the present day employ in the manufacture of ornamental pastry, and I am not sure if some of the happiest devices attributed to Gunter's imaginative powers may not be found to have been borrowed from this ancient school of gastronomic art. But, I will say no more on this subject, lest further suspicions of a similar nature, on my part, might be attributed

to the envy we ladies feel towards that unrivalled *artiste*, with whose services, do what we will, we cannot dispense ; though, after feasting us on good things, fit for Lucullus' table, when supper was ordered in the Apollo chamber, these are too often followed by such a memorandum as causes us to make wry faces, and sets our minds ill at ease, if not our teeth on edge. But to turn from a disagreeable subject to one always pleasing. We saw a glass-covered table in the middle of the room, which displayed necklaces, pins, bracelets, earrings, &c., composed of coloured stones and gold finely wrought, all apparently of the most modern description, though fabricated there is no saying how much more than eighteen centuries ago. The English ladies now in Naples are procuring from their jewellers the most captivating articles possible, of the same description, and I overhear a good deal of discussion as to whether the facsimiles of the earrings of Diomed's daughter, or of those of his wife, are to be preferred.

In an adjoining room, we saw the papyri in different stages. In the first instance, it resembles sticks of burnt charcoal, most hopeless in appearance; but what will not skill and perseverance accomplish? A gentleman was in the act of unrolling one of the pieces, which to uninitiated eyes seemed only fit for fuel. He had by him a box of very minute portions of goldbeater's leaf, or stuff like it, not much larger, I apprehend, than the black patches worn by the ladies in the days of the Spectator, such as Will Honeycomb recommended Mrs. Truelove to re-adjust when she was in a state of excitement about Dr. Sacheverel, or Titus Oates. By the aid of a fine camel's-hair pencil, those delicate applications were laid under the wounded parts, on the side where no writing had been. The *ci-devant* manuscript (now tinder) is attached horizontally to silk ribands, and is unrolled by means of a small handle, which turns like that of a barrel-organ, moved, however, in a most slow, delicate manner by one person, whilst another places underneath the aforesaid

small portions of goldbeater's leaf, which being done, the words may be discerned, and if this country possesses a Useful Knowledge Society, like ours, there is no telling how it may become enriched by ancestral wisdom. When the anxious work is accomplished of unfolding a substance, to all appearance fragile as the film we sometimes see floating on the bars of our grates, or black and shrivelled as burnt paper, (which latter it is in fact,) then is it laid and gummed on vellum, and afterwards framed and glazed like a print, or drawing. When thus exhibited hanging on the walls, some of the most ruined look at a distance like portions of seaweed, when the fibres are distended in water. Still even on such, from the shade or relief of the ink or paint originally employed, single letters, and sometimes a word, can be made out. These suggest to the acute minds of the *Savans* all the rest that have been destroyed, which they are not backward in supplying, and they give to the world new impressions of old works neatly printed, having not more than about three parts

out of four added by their own ingenuity! The number of charcoal-looking manuscripts (so unlike the illuminated treasures of the convents) are altogether about one thousand seven hundred, of which one thousand three hundred are yet untouched.

By persons working as diligently as at present, in the course of two or three centuries it may be hoped that the contents of the whole number will be laid before the public, unless Vesuvius, insensible to the tastes and well-being of the learned world, as the destroyer of the Alexandrian library, should, in the mean time, complete the work of destruction so nearly accomplished.

The Italians neither measure nor manage time according to our practice; the hour of two being come by our watches—fourteen or fifteen by those of the custodi—we could no longer remain at the Museo; the doors were closed; so whilst our impressions were recent as to the bracelets and other ornaments worn by the

belles of Pompeii, we repaired to our jeweller's to see if he was executing some we had ordered in strict accordance with the antique models we had been examining.

LETTER XXII.

Naples.

A FACETIOUS story-teller relates that on some occasion the tragedy of Hamlet was enacted, leaving out the part of the prince so called, and I think my stupidity would be equally memorable if I were to leave Naples, and not give you an account of our visit to Vesuvius, which, accompanied by some friends, we performed yesterday.

The morning was rather unpromising for commencing such an undertaking: however, after some vacillating opinions as to what should be done, we resolved to take our chance of the heavy clouds that alarmed us, being lifted up instead of coming down. We set forward soon after eight o'clock for Resina, a village a little

beyond and almost joining Portici. A great part of the inhabitants, we were told, subsist on the money spent by travellers, who there take horses and guides. We were soon surrounded by a numerous party of both, and then amidst loud vociferations we were conducted into a courtyard. From an upper balcony dogs assailed us by their barking, while children squalled a discordant chorus with their canine friends;—below where we stood, asses brayed; bells, fastened on their heads, tinkled at every movement, the horses of the party were not altogether silent, sometimes joining with a neigh in the universal uproar; a number of men impetuously addressed each other and us, occasionally in rapidly spoken language, and with excessive vehemence; and altogether the asses, dogs, bells, children, &c., precluded our being embarrassed in making an attempt to comprehend a word that was uttered.

What was to be the result of all this uproarious din of confused and discordant noises we were at a loss to conjecture. We soon per-

ceived, however, that the necessary business was as steadily progressing as any grave matter for deliberation could do that was under the consideration of an assembly of quiescent Quakers; and in little more than five minutes of actual time (though to our afflicted ears it appeared ten times as long) we were all seated in our saddles, and emerging from the courtyard into a close lane that was long, and had many turnings;—on leaving which we proceeded upwards by a narrow rugged road, having vineyards and gardens on either side, and in proportion as we ascended, the portentous mists and clouds moved off, and the country around opened to our view, displaying innumerable beauties, to which the brightly budding vines formed a lovely foreground.

At length, these were seen no more; instead of their tender verdure, dark masses of black cinders lay before us, like the refuse of a world that had been destroyed by fire; we seemed to have entered on the wide domain of the giant of despair, where all belonging to life and hope

was extinguished; and it was almost pleasing (by contrast) to escape from that sombre scene into a deeply sunken narrow road, where the banks on either side were so high we could perceive nothing but the loose stones on which our cavalry had to erect themselves in an almost perpendicular position, so steep was the ascent to the hermit's abode, which we at length reached, as much to our satisfaction; (for I felt fatigued and overheated,) as any knight, I fancy, ever experienced on penetrating within the strong enclosure that confined his "ladye love." Our eyes, delighted as if he had been an angel, robed in light, rested on the hermit, who came forward to meet us; he is a monk of the Augustinian order, a bulky personage, whose ample woollen petticoats were bound by a girdle from which hung a rosary. His grey hair was confined by the small black cap that covers the bald part at the top of the head, where an absence of hair is indispensable even in the youngest member of the clerical fraternities—of course, the razor must be resorted to until they

are saved such trouble by *time*, the general Shaver, giving a touch of his scythe, some farther use of which exempts them, in common with all human beings, from every worldly care and embarrassment.

Mine host of the hermitage, all accounts agree in representing as an amiable, benevolent man, and such his countenance bespeaks him. His house is erected on a small level piece of ground; where it, and one that was its precursor, have stood above two hundred and fifty years, during which time neither abode has suffered in the least degree from any one of the many eruptions that have taken place in the immediate vicinity, although so near to Vesuvius, that the hermit might occasionally realize the account old Croaker, in the play of "The Goodnatured Man," gives of his insensible family, when he complains that they would fry beef-steaks at a volcano.

The house, to which a chapel is attached, is small and indifferent. It is surrounded by a few stunted trees; the front is judiciously turned

away from its awful neighbour. Notwithstanding its insignificant dimensions, it is, from being whitewashed, and in so elevated a situation, a conspicuous object at even a great distance. When seen relieved by the black mountains in its rear, it looks like a bright star that directs the navigator in the midst of a perilous and trackless path.

The road, five miles in length, by which we ascended from Resina, is on a ridge of land distinct from the adjacent mountains of Somma and Vesuvius. On a portion of it the hermitage is placed, and from thence it continues pretty level, and of a saddle-shape, for about two miles, when it terminates at, or rather joins, Vesuvius—the eruptions from which run down in burning lava, leaving this high ridge of land (composed of original soil) free from the overwhelming deluge that falls on the declivities. Encouraged by the wonderful manner in which the hermitage has hitherto escaped, the government are at present erecting very near it, by order of the king, a building for the promotion

of scientific objects. A great many workmen are employed, and, when completed, the edifice will be inhabited by a competent savant, who is to possess all the instruments, apparatus, "appliances and means to boot," for making such observations as the awful locality affords. We are acquainted with the clever, scientific gentleman, Signor Fazzini, under whose direction the establishment is advancing, and respecting which he is enthusiastic in his anticipations. It will include a garden for the cultivation of any plants that will grow there.

After resting a little time at the hermitage, we remounted our horses and mules, and proceeded along the level ridge I have described, called, from several wooden crosses placed at intervals, "La Montagna delle Crocelle." On our left were the mountains of Vesuvius and Somma, rising from one base about thirty miles in circumference. We were told that Somma is fertile, and inhabited on the other side; but on that presented to us it is scarped, jagged, and covered with volcanic materials. It is the

opinion of geologists that Somma, at some distant period, in the darkness of ages gone by, when no scientific register was kept, brought forth Vesuvius, suffering much in shape by the prodigious birth, since which event the parent has remained in repose, and the offspring so far followed the example, that about eight or nine years before the first recorded eruption, A. D. 79, Spartacus and ten thousand men, gladiators and helots, ensconced themselves in its crater, to the dismay of the surrounding inhabitants, who, perhaps, dreaded an irruption from thence of armed men, more than their successors have since done the outpourings of living fire.

As we advanced towards Vesuvius, it looked fearfully black and steep. My courage failed, and I decided on letting the rest of the party ascend without me. I dreaded encountering the sulphureous vapour which, when the wind is in certain points, produces distressing effects on persons forced to inhale it.

Being arrived at the place called "Atrio dei Cavalli," (Horse Court,) the adventurers dis-

mounted, as horses can go no farther; they proceeded, and I, having wished them a safe and satisfactory excursion, returned slowly towards the hermitage, musing on the scene before me. After my eye had passed over the black lava that, like a deluge, had covered the ground to a far extent, towards the base of the mountain, I saw a succession of towns along the coast, in which it is computed are eighty thousand inhabitants. Churches, vineyards, gardens, cultivated fields, were there likewise, and all appearances of tranquil enjoyment and prosperity. The bright sea was enlivened by boats and other vessels—the sails of many looking like the distended wings of birds passing along the blue expanse. Islands, promontories, and mountains were grouped in such beauty and variety, that the magnificent scene seemed created when Nature "wantoned as in her prime, and played at will her virgin fancies."

The lowering morning had given place to a midday of bright sunshine—a few clouds only serving the purpose of casting some partial and

fine shadows. I should probably have lingered *en route* until the party who had left, rejoined me—but that my horse quickened his pace, wishing to find himself in the stable of the hermitage, at a short distance from which I alighted. Just where ten or twelve large up-raised flags higher and more massive than common tombstones, are placed in a double row at short intervals, I sat down on a bench attached to the end, and largest one of them. In each, deeply inlaid to preserve it from the effects of weather, is placed a small and coarsely-painted picture, with an appropriate text, descriptive of the last hours of our Saviour's life. Before going to their morning's labour, we were told the neighbouring peasants assemble to offer their devotions at those rude "*stations*," as they are called

——————— Not honoured
With fond shekels of the tested gold,
Or stones whose rates are either rich or poor,
As fancy values them; but with true prayers,
Prayers that rise up to Heaven, and enter there,
Ere sun-rise."

Of the state of religion amongst the higher classes in Naples and the neighbourhood, we have had no means of forming any opinion, but amongst the lower grade I can bear testimony to there being every appearance of great devotion. The principal station, at which I sat, contained a representation of our blessed Lord's crucifixion; and as I looked from it to the black mountain before me, whose consuming flames had dried up vegetation, and still from time to time sends forth

"The fiery deluge fed with ever-burning sulphur,"

my fancy pictured it as a physical image of sin, which caused the sacrifice that Calvary witnessed.

I remained seated at the station where solemn thoughts were suggested to my mind by the place and surrounding objects, and was not aware how quickly the time had passed until I saw one of our party, who had preceded the rest, riding towards me with great glee and satisfaction in her countenance, to relate her adventures—and tell of the roasting of eggs by the na-

tural heat on the summit—the ignition of sticks by putting them into crevices, &c. But no sight, she said, was to be compared in interest to looking down upon the unroofed dwellings and monumental solitude of Pompeii, which lay immediately beneath, all but a portion of its walls and fallen pillars, consumed, forlorn, and drear.

No attempt was made by any of the party to descend into the crater, though some hardy spirits occasionally venture downwards. Fifty years ago that achievement was practicable to a greater extent than at present. Now I am told that little can be distinguished in the abyss, except loose, huge masses of lava, which, some suppose, judging from appearances, will probably be ejected thence before very long. At the period of an eruption, geologists are of opinion that the lava at the bottom of the crater glows with the splendour of a meridian sun!

We soon joined the rest of our party in the little open space before the hermitage, which just then presented a scene of great bustle, such

as was frequent at hostelries when pilgrimages to the shrine of some distant saint or virgin, congregated together numbers of the higher and lower classes. Guides and peasants were busily engaged in adjusting some on their saddles, and helping off others, whilst the hermit, assisted by a neighbouring priest, was speeding the parting, or welcoming the coming guests.

We heard German, French, Italian, and English spoken at one and the same moment. Some parties were arriving, others were making arrangements for mounting their horses and mules to descend to Resina. Young and fair faces were there full of animation, and middle-aged ladies also were attended by their respective cavaliers. In the days of chivalry only the young and handsome were thought of, but happily for our sex at large in these more prosaic times, attention and consideration are not confined to those who are enjoying the brightest period of existence.

From what I say on this subject you will suspect my particular feelings are akin to those of

the French lady, who, at eighty-five years of age, being asked when the *devoirs* of gentlemen ceased to be agreeable, answered with true French *esprit*, that she could give no reply, as she had not attained the period of life in question, and that a more aged lady than herself must be resorted to for the purpose of solving the matter.

I do not know of any distinguished person in the London world, who, during *the season*, receives in a single day more company than the hermit does at present. The guide told us he had made inquiries, and that since the early morning above a hundred persons, besides their attendants, had called at the hermitage, *en route* to Vesuvius. During the winter months, the case is different. The hermit and one poor servant live quite alone.

Our obliging friend, Signor Fazzini, had secured for our accommodation one of the few rooms in the hermitage; he had an excellent cold dinner prepared, of which we partook very heartily. The priest, before mentioned, kept us company; he comes to officiate on Sundays at the ad-

joining chapel, and generally remains for a day or two during the week. He told us that Milton had been several times to Vesuvius, an account of whose visits was traditionally handed down from the hermit who had the honour of receiving him, to his successor, and so was transmitted to the present owner of the hermitage. Our illustrious bard, from observations made there, probably derived ideas for some of those sublime descriptions, which only Dante, plunging boldly in imaginative powers into the infernal regions, ever equalled. After we had been regaled most agreeably, both by food and conversation, we ordered our cattle, and reached Resina just at the decline of day,

"As twilight melted beneath the moon away."

LETTER XXIII.

Naples.

THERE are two very remarkable castles here; one, called St. Elmo, is situated on the high steep hill which rises at the back of this city. The early Greek colonists gave it the appellation of Ermo, from a Phœnician word meaning lofty or sublime. On that bold, commanding site the Norman followers of De Hauteville erected a tower, named by them Belforte. At a subsequent period, Charles II. added to it, and converted it into a strong castle; and by the Emperor Charles V. it was made a regular citadel. At present, St. Elmo exhibits nothing fine in point of architecture—there are neither battlemented walls nor towers; but it is imposing and magnificent from the idea

it conveys of power, seeming, in its massive, sombre strength, like a gloomy monarch, holding all the smiling world beneath at his command; it looks a place of defence formed by nature itself—"a giant guardian of an enchanted land." Much of it is composed of the rock on which it is placed, hewn into walls. The whole has the appearance of being neither more nor less than the living rock itself, elevated by other power than man's puny efforts to such solid, massive greatness.

We ascended to this castle, and found that all admittance is denied without an order, with which we were not provided. We are told that we had no loss, as the interior has no recommendations, and is only a great *depôt* for arms and artillery.

At a little distance beneath, is the church of San Martino, where formerly was a country house of the kings of Naples. Robert the Good yielded to the request of his son, the Duke of Calabria, who desired it might be superseded by or converted into a sacred build-

ing; and accordingly, a church, with a monastery attached, was there erected in 1325, endowed first by the king, and afterwards by his grand-daughter and successor, the unfortunate Joan I.; and, at a later period, the former was embellished by magnificent paintings of the first masters, as well as by finely carved Brazilian wood and sculptured marbles.

The monastery was employed by the French, in 1807, for the accommodation of a different fraternity from that which had found shelter within its walls,—it was converted into barracks. Whether the building has been restored to its original destination I cannot say, but I conclude this to be the case from the fact of the ladies of our party being excluded, (soldiers would certainly not have refused us admittance,) while the church was shown to the gentlemen by a monk.

The other castle which I mentioned as being remarkable, is that named Castello dell' Uovo, from some supposed likeness in its form (which I could never perceive) to the shape

of an egg, not even to that of an ostrich. It stands in the sea, and is connected by a narrow, artificial passage with the land. It is said that an earthquake caused it to slip away from the high hill of Pizzo Falcone in its rear, so called from a chase for falcons that it afforded to Charles of Anjou. How this may have been I will not undertake to say, for in the *terra di lavoro* much that was high is low, and *vice versa*; but certainly no castle was ever placed by earthquake or by the hand of man in a more picturesque, or, for purposes of defence, more important situation than that which it occupies at the entrance of the harbour, where only under its favour can any vessel advance. It stands in all directions visible, to protect or command those who approach the city by sea. It is always a noble object, whether looked at in the grey morning, when occasionally mists amplify its grandeur, or seen gilded by the rays of the setting sun, which fall on it gloriously. We have sometimes sat in the garden of the Villa Reale, watching the waves, if the wind

was at all high, running up its imperturbable walls like sea monsters, assailing them with mad and impotent fury, or, like tempest-driven snow, dispersing in light atoms against the barren mountain's side.

This castle is said to have belonged to that distinguished epicurean, Lucullus; but I am rather incredulous as to any one man having been the owner of so many residences as we are told belonged to him, even in this neighbourhood, independently of his luxurious dwellings near Rome. If, on this subject, tradition be correct, he must have had at least twice as many villas and palaces as history informs us Bluebeard had wives. Whether or not he had a residence of either description on this spot, it formed so obviously an important site for a strongly fortified building, that it was converted into a castle not less massive and impregnable, to all appearance, than that of St. Elmo.

The honour was conferred upon this building of becoming the prison of the young Augustulus, the last Emperor of Rome, who

was banished by Odoacer, king of the Heruli, and first king of Italy, about 475. Successive sovereigns have made additions to it, and it now looks like a twin brother of the castle of St. Elmo, placed in an opposite but equally advantageous position for the defence of the city and the harbour. It stands forward, ready to meet half way any bold intruder; and in every point of view conveys the idea of protection, and heightens the beauty of the surrounding scenery.

There is another very remarkable castle, called Castel Nuovo, not situated either so high or so low as the others I have attempted to describe. On one side its round towers are seen in the midst of houses, and on the other it fronts the sea and the Mole, on which latter has been erected a light-house that has a striking and beautiful effect, particularly when seen from a distance. The Castel Nuovo was built by Charles I., of Anjou, who did not consider the ancient palace, Castello Capuano, (now called Vicaria, and converted into courts of

justice,) sufficiently secure for his residence, and capable of being defended. The fortifications that surround it were commenced by Alphonso I., of Arragon, and completed by the great Captain Gonzalvo de Cordova, who, had he acceded to the proposal made to him by the Neapolitans, of becoming himself their king, might here, with the aid of his devoted soldiers, have defied all assailants; but the offer of a crown could not for a moment shake his loyalty to the sovereign whom he served,—on one occasion, indeed, too literally for his own honour, by allowing his pledged word to the Duke of Calabria, guaranteeing him a free passage to join his abdicated father in France, to be broken. In consequence of Ferdinand's commands, he caused the young prince to be stopped, and brought back to Tarento—which place had capitulated on terms including the duke's liberty—and from thence he was sent to Spain, where he remained a prisoner. This transaction is the only stain that tarnished the lustre of the hero's name. His various fine

qualities were set forth even by his enemies, when they called him "gentil capitaine, et gentil cavalier." For himself he disregarded wealth; but though he obtained permission—probably because it could not well be refused—liberally to reward his companions in arms, his economical master, Ferdinand, was nevertheless heard peevishly to exclaim, "It little boots for Gonzalvo de Cordova to have won a kingdom for me, if he lavishes it all away before it comes into my hands."

At that period, such were the achievements and bearing of the gallant youths of France, Spain, and Italy, that, in allusion to them, an eloquent writer of the present day has said: "The romantic Muse of Italy, then coming forth in her glory, did little more than give a brighter flush of colour to the chimeras of real life. The characters of living heroes, a Gonzalvo, a Bayard, a Paredes, and a La Palice, readily supplied her with the elements of those ideal combinations in which she has so gracefully embodied the perfections of chivalry."

"Magnanima menzogna! or quando è il vero
Si bello, che si possa a te preporre?"

But to return from these seductive Paladins to the castle from whence I have rambled. After passing the outer fortifications, between two towers is the triumphal arch erected in honour of the entry of Alphonso of Arragon into his then newly-acquired dominions. The whole is of marble, encrusted with statues and bassi relievi, now much discoloured by time; and so numerous are the actions of his majesty illustrated by the sculptor's art, that modern patience does not suffice, as far as I can judge, to attempt comprehending them through the medium of the laboured and crowded performances in marble of the Chevalier Pietro di Martino, Alphonso's architect and historian.

Near to the arch is a magnificent bronze gate, ornamented also with bassi relievi, recording warlike achievements. Amongst the heroes and destroyers of our species, the most conspicuous of the latter description is a great stuffed crocodile, six feet long, placed over the arch-

way. It was pointed out to me by our servant Eugene, and on his authority I venture to record that it ate innumerable prisoners in the dungeons underneath. Whether the horrid creature owed its death to the great captain, or to some other chevalier "sans peur," Eugene could not inform me.

We next passed into the square called the Place d'Armes, where is an antique chapel ornamented with paintings and marbles. The former theatre is converted into an armoury, which contains arms for sixty thousand men. A gallery passes under arches, and forms an internal communication (which might be found useful in case of attack or insurrection) between the castle and the present royal palace, which latter is situated in a square at no great distance.

The Castel Nuovo is no longer used as a residence by the kings of Naples; the palace, which they occupy, is of great extent, but not at all handsome externally.

Opposite to the latter is the very grand church

of St. Francis, erected by the late king in consequence, it is believed, of a vow made by his father, Ferdinand, which he had not the power to fulfil. The form of the church, on a smaller scale, is the same as the Pantheon, and lighted also by one circular aperture at the top. The dome is said to be twelve feet larger than that of St. Paul's, in London. The interior is beautifully decorated; there are many fine statues in white marble, the work of native artists; on the outside it is very different from the time-honoured "dread Pantheon, so simply, so severely great." Here the church is approached by a handsome new colonnade and a range of shops up to the entrance. Altogether, however, it forms a suitable *vis-à-vis* to the palace. The other sides of the square in which these are situated—called "il Largo del Castello"—are occupied on the one hand by a palace belonging to the queen-mother, and on the other by handsome public offices. There is in the centre a fine bronze equestrian statue of the late king Francis.

The church that interested me above all others in Naples is that of Santa Maria del Carmine, in the market-place. *There* is buried young Conradin, the last of the Hohenstauffens. He was the undoubted heir to the throne of Naples, and, accompanied by his cousin, the Duke of Austria, proceeded thither. Confident of support from the Ghibeline party, they advanced with a small body of German troops, hoping to drive Charles of Anjou from his lately-acquired dominion, usurped under the authority of successive popes. They were, however, defeated, and fled for shelter to Frangipani, a nobleman of Asturia, who basely betrayed and gave them up to their enemy, and the young men were imprisoned.

The mother of Conradin, the Empress Margaret, repaired to Naples, taking with her a large sum of money for their ransom. On arriving, the answer she received to her eager inquiries was, that the prince and his cousin had been executed some days before. The gold she fondly hoped would have restored

her son to her arms was employed upon his funeral and in procuring masses to be said for his soul. She was permitted to have his body, and also that of the duke, transferred from an outer part of the church (which she greatly enlarged) to a tomb behind the high altar, on which the names of the royal youths are inscribed. They were assassinated in October, 1269.

In Brantome's memoirs there is a most interesting account of the spirited and dignified deportment and words of Conradin in his last moments; and also of the grief he expressed for the fate of his cousin: which I happened to read very lately, and which I will now transcribe. There are some old French words and others employed in an obsolete manner, that you must take as you find them. After narrating how Conradin and his cousins were taken prisoners, he proceeds—

"Au vingt-troisième d'Octobre l'on étendit des couvertures de Velours Cramoisi au milieu du marché de Naples, au lieu où fut mise depuis une Colonne devant l'église des Carmes.

Et furent amenés sur les couvertures Conradin et le Duc d'Austriche, et autres en grand presse du peuple, non seulement de France, et Néapolitains, mais de toutes les villes voisines, qui étoient accourus à ce cruel spectacle, lequel aussi le Roi Charles vit, combien qu'il fut en une tour assez loin de là, regardant tout ce qui s'y faisait.

"Quand ils furent venus—Maistre Robert de Barry, premier Greffier du Roi Charles, monta sur un Perron, que l'on avoit dressé tout exprès et lut la sentence de mort contre les susdits, pour avoir troublé la paix de l'Eglise, avoir faussement usurpé le nom du Roi, vouloir occuper et attenter contre la propre personne du Roi même; à quoi Conradin dit en langue Latine à celui qui la prononça, la valeur de telles paroles. 'Traitre, paillard Méchant, tu as condamné le fils du Roi, et ne sais tu pas qu'un pareil sur son pareil n'a point de commandement ni de puissance, et ne le peut condamner à la mort.'

"Puis il n'y a qu'il eut voulu offenser l'Eglise,

mais seulement conquêter le royaume qui lui appartenoit, et qu'on lui retenait à tort, mais qu'il espéroit que sa mort seroit vengée, et tirant un gand de sa main, le jetta vers le peuple, comme un signe d'investiture, mais plûtot de vengeance, disant qu'il laissoit son héritier Don Frederic de Castille fils de sa tante.

" Ce dit gand fut recueilli d'un chevalier, et depuis porté au Roi, Pierre d'Arragon.

" Cela fait, le premier fut le Duc d'Autriche à qui la tête fut tranchée, laquelle separée du corps cria par deux fois *Jesus Maria !*

" Et Conradin, l'ayant prise la baisa tendrement et la serrant contre sa poitrine, pleura le malheur de son compagnon, s'accusant soi-même qu'il avoit été cause de sa mort, l'ayant tiré d'avec sa mère, et l'ayant mené avec soi à si cruelle fortune. Puis se mit à genoux les mains et les yeux levées au Ciel, demandant pardon, et sur ce point l'executeur de tel office fit voler la tête et à d'autres après.

" Et a ce ministre bourreau un autre pour cela appareillé fit le semblable qui'il avoit fait

aux autres, lui coupant incontinent la tête, afin qu'il ne se put jamais vanter d'avoir répandu si noble sang.

"Les corps sans têtes demeurerent sur terre long temps, et ne fut homme si hardi d'y toucher, jusques à tant que Charles eut commandé qu'ils fussent ensevelis.

"Telle fut la fin, misérable de ce jeune Prince Conradin, plaint et pleuré de tous ceux qui le virent mourir."

Brantome farther records the execrations, loud and deep, that followed this fearful crime; from the effects of which, both the perpetrator, Charles of Anjou, and his descendants suffered much.

* * * * *

We went yesterday to see the church of Santa Chiara, one of the finest in Naples. It contains remarkable massive and striking monuments erected to the memory of King Robert, (the Good,) the founder of the church; also of his son, Charles Duke of Calabria, and of his grand-daughter, Queen Joan the First, whose

misery he sealed by the precaution he took to secure, as he hoped, her welfare by uniting her to her relative, Andrew of Hungary; but as Burns truly says,

> "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
> Gang aft agley,
> And lea'e us nought but grief and pain
> For promised joy."

There is a convent attached to this church, which is only separated from the chapel belonging to it by a large *grille* at the back of the high altar. As I stood there, I saw several of the nuns passing and repassing. I thought they might perhaps often, in looking through the *grille* upon the royal tombs we had been observing, derive subject for wholesome contemplation, calculated to make them feel satisfied with the peaceful seclusion of their own lot, far removed from the contrasts of dazzling splendour and sombre vicissitudes of such as those whose remains present a lesson to all hearts.

We went afterwards up a steep but short ascent to see the church called "Del Parto."

It is small, and not remarkable for its architecture, or ornaments. It possesses, however, great interest from being built, as well as an adjoining convent, by the amiable and elegant poet, Sannazarius, on the site of his favourite villa, Mergellina, the beauty of which he has celebrated in verse. It was destroyed during the siege of Naples by the French. In the church is his tomb, adorned with statues and bassi relievi representing the subjects of his poems. The statues of Apollo and Minerva were in requisition to do him honour, and are well executed; but the monks, not liking such interlopers, have treated them like gentiles brought within the pale of true believers; they have inscribed the name of David on the former, and Jove's own daughter is called Judith! To the lovers of the sculptor's art this homage to tender consciences makes no difference,

"A rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."

The Latin epitaph was composed by his contemporary Bembo; it has been translated thus:

Upon the sacred dust be flow'rets spread;
He sung like Maro once; he rests by Maro, dead.*

The Neapolitans are justly proud of Sannazarius; he was not only an admirable poet, but evinced qualities of the noblest kind; amongst other instances may be cited his devoted fidelity to his abdicated sovereign, King Frederick, who continued to be, whilst in adversity, (a pensioner of France,) the subject of several of his sweetest productions. Adversity, which, like winter silencing the songs of birds—commonly puts an end to the bard's laudatory effusions, did not chill such as came "warm from his heart, and faithful to its fires." The verses (some of which fondly predicted his master's restoration, and that of his dynasty,) proved Sannazarius to be a poet,

* Bembo, who afterwards became a cardinal, was the author of an exquisite sonnet scarcely inferior to the well-known lament of Filicaja of a later date; it begins,

"O pria sì cara al ciel del mondo parte,
Che l'acqua cigne, e'l sasso orrido serra;
O lieta sopra ogn'altra e dolce terra,
Che 'l superbo Appennin segna e diparte," &c. &c.

but no prophet, as the hoped for event never came to pass.

The church and grave of the poet did not detain us very long, and we got into our carriage to take, I am afraid for the last time, (for we are on the point of leaving Naples,) the most beautiful of all drives, along the Strada Nuovo. In returning, we stopped to see a villa belonging to the Prince d'Angrie, whose ancestor came from Genoa, where he had borne a part in the victories achieved by Andrea Doria. We ascended by rows of terraces one over another cut in the rock at doubtless great expense. "Blooming rocks," which Pope wrote of, in *badinage*, are there truly to be found. The Mesymbrianthums, which scarcely require any soil, have taken root in every niche and shelving spot; and now that these are in blossom, their crimson flowers are hanging in profusion down the side of the rocks, as if summer threw her embroidered mantle over the chill dreariness of winter. The terraces, also, are bordered with the richest flowers of every dye Ranunculuses,

anemones, and roses, are the most conspicuous, mingled with shrubs, amongst which latter the deep purple of the lilac and its rich clusters could not be overlooked.

The villa is modern, extremely handsome and well kept, but not adorned with paintings or marbles; nothing, however, is found wanting there;— the senses are charmed amidst exquisite flowers, and the views of that delicious shore

"Where slumbering seas forget their wonted roar."

From thence the beautiful bay appears all but surrounded by mountains and islands. The city of Naples, and the towns and villages at the base of Vesuvius, and of the more distant mountains, were all, as it were, lighted up by the radiance of the sky, which was preparing for the setting of the sun in the opposite direction.

After leaving the villa, we ascended on foot, the very steep hill, or I should say mountain, at the back, a portion of the Vomero that rises so perpendicularly behind Naples. We paced along terraces cut zig-zag, surrounded on all sides by fig-trees and vines coming into leaf, and

already so green that the only want we have hitherto observed, a want of verdure, is now abundantly supplied, and beautifully so, by the vines wreathing from one tree to another; light and graceful, as if created to sport with the wanton zephyrs playing around them.

We got into the carriage, on reaching the summit of the steep ascent we had climbed, and there again a scene awaited us, such as I should in vain attempt to describe. The convent of Camaldoli on a dark steep hill was on our right; before us we saw the harbour and ancient city of Pozzuoli, and the small green island of Nisida. In the distance we could distinguish the Arco Felice at Cumæ, by which we had reached the Sibyl's cave, and the Elysian fields, and the eye traversed from thence along the golden coast of Baiæ, terminating in the bold promontory of Misenum, beyond which lay the islands of Procida and Ischia; and over all, not cast into deep shade, fell the glowing tints of a setting sun. Memory and imagination were both kindled, and we could fancy the masters of the world luxuriating in this unrivalled scenery.

We lingered until the bright hues fast disappearing, and advancing shadows warned us home; whilst reflecting that the time for our departure was come, I could not help exclaiming, in the Miltonic language of our great maternal ancestor

"And must I leave thee, Paradise!"

But I fortunately recollected, and it helped to suppress my sighs, that although she had "the world before her where to choose," it did not contain London to afford her its comforts and *agrémens*, which *locale*, by-the-bye, the travelled and accomplished Lord Chesterfield said is superior for nine months in the year to any other place, and as good for the other three. But, it must be admitted, he was more adapted to live in the *beau monde* than to find delight in the "pomp of groves and the garniture of fields," or in "the dread magnificence of Heaven." Wax lights and sparkling chandeliers were doubtless more to his taste than "stars, which are the poetry of Heaven."

END OF VOL. I.

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